

This Old House

THE TOH TOP 100

2011 BEST
NEW HOME
PRODUCTS

17 little ways to save big

Custom-look DIY projects
for every room in your house

HANDMADE
HOLIDAY
IDEAS
p. 50

NOVEMBER | DECEMBER 2011
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50
GET
THIS
LOOK
FOR
LESS



{ November/December 2011 } **contents**

BEST NEW HOME PRODUCTS

81 the TOH top 100

All the product improvements to make your home smarter, easier, and more stylish

idea file

31 before + after: kitchen

A former family room becomes an open, eat-in cook space and the heart of the house

39 before + after: bath

Period touches and getting tile turn a passé pink bath into a room with function and style

46 budget redo

Newmaking, trim paint, and lighting switch on a dull dining room's charm

57 Photoshop redo

Gables, siding, and a porch put a balanced face on a brick house's ranch

68 detail work

A 1906 folk Victorian gets more light, air, and breathing room

TOH tv

63 salvaging pieces of the past

The TOH team's creative reuse of old materials in new spaces keeps the project house's historic integrity intact

upgrades

49 price wise

Wall mount medicine cabinet

50 get this look for less

Handmade holiday dining room decor

105 all about

Kitchen islands

PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE PROJECT HOUSE; DESIGN: LISA WILSON; PHOTOGRAPHY: JEFFREY M. HARRIS; STYLING: JESSICA HARRIS



98
ON THE COVER



39
BEFORE + AFTER: BATH

81
BEST NEW
HOME
PRODUCTS



on the cover

81 Best new home products of 2011
71 52, 21, 28
46 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100

Cover Photograph (This Issue)
by JEFFREY M. HARRIS

Cover Photograph (October)
by JEFFREY M. HARRIS



31
BEFORE + AFTER: KITCHEN

50 GET THIS LOOK FOR LESS: HANDMADE HOLIDAY DINING ROOM DECOR

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71
WEEKEND
DEMOCRAT

Elevate a room's style—and add value to your home—with a DIY wainscot project. We show you how to get pro-quality results.

[home solutions](#)

- 27 Ceiling medallions are a thing of the past (a long time). Stakes for rubber bands, sis bolts to get you going on gliding, budget toys for drafty windows, make sure your Christmas tree arrives home safe and sound, anywhere.

how-to projects

- DIY paint ideas**
Create waves of texture on a flat wall with a sea sponge and colored glaze
- DIY home center project**
Sleep just almost! Make a handsome planter box rack
- DIY weekend remodel**
Dustup by steps: how you how to enhance any room with the classic look of painted wainscoting

ask this old house

- 115 Q + A** Choose thought extension cord for outdoor holiday lights give a new copper stove hood an aged patina; get rid of chimney stains; replace a cracked under-mount sink; use ladder stand off to help you clean gutters safely
- 118 step-by-step** Replace a baluster
- 120 Norm's tricks of the trade** Learn how to cut a return for the profile on decorative moldings

in every issue

- 17 [thisoldhouse.com](#)
- 18 [letter from This Old House](#)
- 19 [reader mail](#)
- 20 [checklist](#) Easy ways to improve your home right now
- 21 [directory](#)
- 22 [save this old house](#)



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IDEA FILE



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letter {from This Old House}

Finally, the addition's complete

I underestimated the TOH family when I stopped writing my editor's letter back in September. I didn't think anyone would notice. So when the e-mails started coming—from Gayle Gadsden, whom I didn't work here anymore, from Lon Fink, concerned I'd hurt myself in a DIY project, and from dozens of others of you—I was touched. I truly appreciate the concern. And I apologize for taking a pass.

The thing is, I was a little tied up with the new addition. That's the addition there in the photo. Our boy. Our amazing little guy.

For a long time, my wife and I didn't think we would be able to have a child. When we started our remodel five years ago, it was our intention to finish fast, because we wanted a family fast. Not surprisingly, many of the plans and decisions we made were based on having a brood. The master project turned out to be so easy as we thought, and to be honest with you, there were times when we wanted to give up on both, especially the remodeling.

May be some of you understand. The toddler-baby rule in the hall closet sort of makes you wish no hope of tiny cuts on it. The mattress you cleverly placed in the island—the better to give wet ones easy access—just becomes a helper to your grown-up back. And the mudroom you were so excited about doesn't hold the same interest when you're told you'll never have little feet bracing in the mud.

But for some reason—stubbornness, foolishness, hope beyond reason—we didn't give up. And though the remodel is still a long way from done, our family, even if it gets no bigger, is complete. And I now understand a little bit better some of the remarkable lengths to which so many of you have gone to build homes for your own families. I also understand that, in the end, without a doubt and despite the difficulties, my wife and I were blessed.

My neighbor Bev, who, along with her husband, Jim, is a TOH reader, popped in for a visit one evening not too long ago. She came to see our new baby and tell us about her own expectant daughter. After a bit, holding our little guy over my shoulder and patting his back, I asked her son. As she was leaving, she paused by the gate, she looked back at us both and said, "See, you seem so happy. So happy. I think you should write about him in one of your letters." I demurred. Somehow this little baby seemed too precious and personal to talk about.

She said, "Think about it. All the people who've followed your hard-luck remodeling stories—they've been in this with you for a long time."

I looked down at the boy in my arms and thought about all the e-mails you guys sent me. "They deserve to hear the happy ending," she said. "You should tell them."

And so, I have.



The editor with his latest best creation: 104 cents. No wife had a time something to do with it. You.

Scott Casper
SCOTT CASPER, EDITOR
scott@thisoldhouse.com

Before you Insulate... Investigate

Fiber glass insulation can help lower your energy bills because it offers superior energy efficiency. Choosing Johns Manville Formaldehyde-free™ fiber glass insulation is choosing a healthier, safer home by reducing overall exposure to formaldehyde.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) recommends limiting your exposure to formaldehyde as much as possible. Reducing the amount of formaldehyde in the home can provide improved indoor air quality and a healthier environment for every one inside. Installing Johns Manville Formaldehyde-free™ fiber glass insulation is one way to achieve that reduction.

• What is Formaldehyde?

Formaldehyde is a colorless gas with a distinct smell. It's used to make many products around your home—flooring, plywood, cabinets—and in fabrics, carpeting and in some cases fiber glass insulation. The formaldehyde gas mixes with the air and exposure occurs mainly as you breathe, but can also be absorbed through the skin. However, Johns Manville fiber glass home insulation is manufactured without formaldehyde.

• Are there environmental benefits to choosing JM Formaldehyde-free™ fiber glass insulation?

Absolutely. Because we've removed the formaldehyde from our fiber glass insulation, we've removed over 200,000 pounds per year of hazardous air pollution. And in addition to recycled glass, fiber glass insulation is made from a sustainable, rapidly replenishing resource—sand.



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readermail

Kitchen redo ideas proved a popular topic last month, as readers weighed in with great comments and ideas in response to our September issue. And we had to calm the fears of many who were alarmed at not finding editor Scott Omelus's monthly letter!

Before you remodel a kitchen

Thanks for all the kitchen tips, especially "Read This Before You Remodel Your Kitchen" (September, page 106). We are thinking about a major kitchen redo, and the choices are truly overwhelming. The tips on saving money, doing the project in stages, and avoiding pitfalls were invaluable. TGH is going right into my planning notebook.

—C.A. GOOD (FAFETTEVILLE, TN)

We are doing a full renovation of our home next year, so I have been doing a lot of research, and my husband and I both agree this was probably the most useful article we have ever taken out of a magazine.

—LAURA MOLO (SCOTT PLAINS, IL)

You listed a lot of great tips for remodeling a kitchen, but there was one comment I would disagree with: that a wine fridge isn't worth the upsurge. It really depends on where you live and how much you enjoy wine. We have a vacation house that

isn't air-conditioned, and in the summer there can be quite a fluctuation of temperature and humidity inside. These shifts would easily wreck a bottle of wine stored in a closet or an open rack. Our wine fridge also gives us the opportunity to buy in bulk and save accordingly. That should pay for the refrigerator over time. Thanks for a great magazine!

—MICHAEL BELL (BALTIMORE AND SCOTTSDALE, MAINE)

All about kitchen faucets

In "All About Kitchen Faucets" (September, page 112), I'd add a note: make sure to check before you buy whether the faucet will clear cabinets overhead. We recently installed new cabinets, a corner sink, and a faucet. We had dutifully measured everything, so imagine our surprise when the cabinet above hung into our beautiful new faucet. Oops! It was the one thing we weren't worried about. Hopefully our mistake will save others from the same trouble.

—ELIZABETH LON (CHICAGO)



Thank you for the article on kitchen faucets. I'd like to add one more problem to avoid: Make sure the spout reaches out far enough that you are not bolting your back as you lean over the sink washing dishes.

—DEBRA PRUSS (CONTOUR, RI)

Where was Scott?

I wrote tell you how disappointed I was to open the September issue and not find Scott's Letter From This Old House! I furiously fought with the coast. Make wind on my face porch, flipping and tugging at pages looking for him. Where is Scott, I ask you? I hope you have not done away with his column. I would be a very sad TGH reader indeed.

—KATHARINE BROWN (OLD ORCHARD BEACH, MAINE)

The editors reply: Not to worry. So hear Scott's explanation for going AWOL from the September issue, the obvious and concerned comment to this month's Letter From This Old House, page 13.

Connections

4 In September's "Wireless Circular Saw" (page 126), the Battery Test chart should have shown the recharge time for the Quikset QCS39SL1 in 1 hour 23 minutes.

how to reach us

The editors: E-mail TGH, letters@theoldhouse.com or write to The Old House Magazine, 125 West 50th Street, New York, NY 10020. Include your full name, address, and phone number. Published letters are edited for clarity and length.

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reader project of the month

Faux carriage doors

PHIL C. SHOLLY WARDEN, OLD RIDG
After reading about a clever way to "fake" carriage houses garage doors (July 2011, Chesapeake Hall of Fame, page 58), I decided to give it a try. I used paint, grooved 1/2 inch plywood siding, pine beam screws, and handles to create the desired appearance for about \$75.



checklist (November/December 2011)

EASY WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR HOME RIGHT NOW

Spiff up carpets

To keep rugs looking fresh, follow these spot-cleaning tips:

1. Spray stains with an enzyme-based cleaner, which can tackle food and most ingrained spots in high-traffic areas.
2. Blot with a sponge, avoiding a back-and-forth motion, as it can damage fibers.
3. Lift soap residue—which can attract dirt after it dries—with a steam cleaner filled with plain water. Do just blot with vinegar, then with clear cold water.



Get an inside peek into TOH

Check out *The Book of David* from *The Old House* (Stewart, Tabor & Chang, \$19.95). TOH TV host Kevin O'Connor's new book details 30 essential unknowns from the show's past decade. For more, go to bookofhouse.com/book.



Be bright when hanging lights

Instead of tacking down twinkles with staples (which can damage wires) or nails (which won't secure strands in heavy winds), opt for zip ties or plastic clips made especially for the job. Hook them onto gutters and shingles, and space them no more than 32 inches apart to keep sagging out, even in pesky weather.



Our Simple Solution: Check All-in-One Zip Tie for \$2.99 at amazon.com

TOH TIP

Winterize uninsulated pipes

Exposed pipes that pass through unheated spaces, such as unfinished basements, can freeze and burst in cold weather. To avoid disaster, wrap the metal with fiberglass and then an insulated foam-rubber sleeve, insulating the corners to ensure coverage, especially on vulnerable elbows.

Inspect your oven

Get ready for the holiday cooking season with a quick oven checkup. If your appliance has a self-cleaning function, avoid using it right before making a major meal, as it can throw off the temperature gauge. And make sure the digital readout matches the oven's actual temp with a trial, and trim cooking times accordingly. If the display is off by more than 5 degrees, manually reset the display so that they're in sync. If the gauge more than 33 degrees off a pre-heating time for a new oven.



Prep a guest room

Treat out-of-town guests to a hotel-worthy stay with these traveler-friendly tweaks:

- Install wall hooks for towels, travel kits, and toiletries.
- Clear 3 feet of road space in the closet.
- Fray up 4 feet of flat surface on a window seat or low bookshelf for any suitcase access.
- Add night lights to hallways and the guest bath.



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Everything you need for gilding

Gilding, the art of applying sheets of real gold or silver to an object, is not of the easiest, least expensive ways to capture the luster of those precious metals. The technique dates as far back as the ancient Egyptians, who used it to embellish furniture, but today gilding is making its mark on everything from mirror frames to architectural ornaments. The point, you no longer need to splurge on sheets of 24-carat gold or seeking silver to achieve this lustrous look. Many companies offer imitation leaf, made of alloys of aluminum or copper and zinc, that look nearly as hot as the real thing. Whether you gild with the genuine article or opt for less expensive metal leaf, you only need a few supplies. Head on to learn the basics. —JENNIFER HARRISON



● Gilding size and foam brush

Using the brush, apply a thin layer of gilding size as adhesive. In your item, if you have to cover a large surface, use a spray formulation; a brush-on liquid (shown) should be used for smaller, more intricate items. Gapp Leaf Gilding Size, \$12 for 4-ounce size (also that applies sizes). Foam brush from \$5 at hardware stores.

● Sandpaper

Before gilding, rough up smooth surfaces with 220-grit sandpaper. Apply with a tack cloth to remove dust. One sandwith-stuffies of medium \$4 for three sheets. Home Depot.com

● Metal leaf and cotton gloves Real gold and silver are sold separately at \$2 per sheet. Made from copper and zinc, this faux gold costs about one-fifth as much and comes backed with a wax film for a easy rub-on application. Hands off with gloves to prevent fingerprints. Mineral Leaf Single Leaf, \$7 for 20 sheets (also for sale). Stores: 11.madeleaf.com

● Tapered chisel brush Gets a surface with lots of nooks and crannies? When applying the leaf, use a paintbrush with tapered bristles to rub it into recesses. Foam \$2, also supply stores.

● Soft, fluffy brush

After applying the leaf, you'll have to brush excess pieces floating loose from the gilded item. Dust them off with this brush. Called a glider, it's up from \$3 at all supply stores.

● Sealer Protect your finished work from fading or tarnishing with a clear spray. Moss Leaf Spray Sealer, \$4 for 5 ounces. armstrong.com



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INSTANT STYLE

A clever home for house plants

Great beds for you're growing indoors, such as paperwhites and anemones, are worth the effort of elegant blooms with this charming, cottage-style planter. To make it, simply nail the front of a wood box (with holes at the bottom for drainage) with chalkboard paint. Lay down the variety of the flower and the date you planted it so that you can chart its growth. When it's time for new plants, just wipe the slate clean with a damp cloth. —DANIELLE BLUNDILL



UPGRADE

Brighten your radiator

Think you have to paint your radiator before winter for the best heat output? Not so. Vibrant colors are just as efficient—and easy to keep their color longer—than pale tones, which can yellow over time. For a ketchup-proof, mild-mannered radiator, fake caution as your final paint job, then use a pastel primer and apply two coats of an oil-based paint in your chosen shade. Allow to cure for at least three weeks before turning on your heat, to prevent odors. —D.B.



ENERGY-SAVERS

Budget fixes for drafty windows

On average, 30 to 25 percent of a home's heat escapes through its windows. If you're feeling drafts, you should consider rigging up even recycling your windows. But if you can't be wise of time or budget—first winter's over—then try these other temporary fixes to help beat the chill.

Plastic film: Applied to panes with double-sided tape and sealed using the heat from a hair dryer, this inexpensive clear shrink film can allow a pane to retain as much as 85 percent of its heat. In a pinch, bubble wrap makes an effective replacement: just push the bubble side of the wrap against the glass and adhere with double-sided tape.

Draft snakes: Step cold air from creeping through windowsills with a snake. You can easily make one yourself by filling a tube of fabric like an old knee sock with dry rice.

Rigid foam: For basement and attic windows you don't need to see out of, cover the panes with a piece of foam board glued to 1/4-inch drywall. Cut pieces to fit snugly inside the frame, press the foam side against the glass, then simply pop out when you want to let in sunlight.

—OLGA SARRILA

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The new DC41 has higher suction power at the cleaner head than any other vacuum. The new cyclone airways have been engineered to reduce turbulence and maximize suction. The brush bar automatically lowers to suit the floor type. The cleaner head automatically self-adjusts to better seal with the floor, reducing air leaks to retain powerful suction.



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STORAGE

Stow cold-sensitive items smartly

The garage is a great place to keep old paint cans and putties—and winter (that is, Temperatures can alter the chemical composition of many household products, and not all goods are able to withstand a freeze. Here, a few items you should bring indoors.



< Latex paint and caulk

Extreme cold can cause many latex-based products to separate, but even temperatures below 40 degrees can compromise their ability to cure.



< Glue and wood putty

Glue may separate or fail to cure once thawed and dried, and putty can lose its workability.



< Power-tool batteries

Mixing with fresh-air rechargable batteries won't work well after being in especially low temperatures. Newer batteries fare better but should be returned to room temperature use.



< Aerosols

Aerosols should always be stored in a cool place—but a freezing climate can cause the can to expand or even rupture.

Nature's what to do with these goods once you get them inside? Choose a cool, dry spot with ventilation, and check each product's label for temperature guidelines. —J.S.



HOLIDAY ADVICE

Get your tree home, fuss-free

Whether you get your holiday evergreen from a local lot or a nearby tree farm, read on for a few foolproof tips on how to transport it without risking life, limb or damage to your house. —M.V.

1. Measure

Before you leave the house, measure the height of the room where you plan to display the tree. It should be at least 6 feet taller than the carrier you buy. Also make sure to measure your car's storage area and roof.

2. Wrap traps

Most trees are sold in netting, which you should leave on so that the branches stay tightly bunched. However, shake the tree's net if it looks needed, then wrap it in bubble wrap or tarp.

3. Point it in the right direction

To avoid wind

damage when driving, arrange the tree so that the stump and faces the front of your vehicle.

4. Tie it off. If you have a roof rack, secure the tree, back where the branches start to its tip, with bungees, cords or rope. Those without a roof rack

should first open all their car doors—not the windows—then tie the tree snugly to the roof with rope. For trees that extend more than 6 inches of that beyond your car's bumper, tie a reflective flag to the white start other drivers.

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before + after:
kitchen

Relocating the cook space

Building a new kitchen in the old family room delivers the central, open-plan gathering place this couple and their kids longed for. **By LIZBET CLASSETT • Photographs by KELLY HODGMAN**



before: Tucked at the back of the house, the existing kitchen was dated, with limited prep and storage space. **after:** Relocated to where the family room once stood, the new open plan kitchen has plenty of room for family and friends.

Start refiguring a home's layout and almost anything may seem possible—including swapping the locations of the family room and the kitchen. For Matt Tocco and his wife, Connie Tocco, moving the kitchen was one of several improvements made during the remodel of their 1969 house, in Croftonville, Maryland. With two kids—joined later by a third—they craved an open sun-in kitchen situated at the center of the household. The existing family room presented just the right spot. So, after a work crew gutted it, taking down a wall to access a side porch as well, the couple worked with kitchen designer Steve Fair to finish out large space with an eating area at one end and plenty of room for entertaining. Today, traffic flows from the kitchen to the new family room (located where the old kitchen stood), starting on a tiled that delineates the cooking-and-eating zone. Pendant lights, wainscote counters, an apron sink with a wall-mount bridge faucet, and refinished pine flooring reinforce the home's period look. "Starting from scratch meant we had a place to cook," says Matt, "but the payoff is having an eat-in kitchen that really serves as the heart of our house."



after

Building the new kitchen in the footprint of the old family room and side porch yielded smarter working + relaxing areas, plus better flow.

before

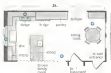
Though a roomy 120 square feet, the kitchen was disjointed and dysfunctional. It became the new family room.



2 Tightened the work triangle by moving the sink, range, and fridge to one corner.

3 Created dining space at new entry, opening a side porch.

1 Framed an interior wall 12 inches outside the exterior wall to form plumbing and a nice deep window sill.



4 Opened up to the new family room. With most of it well down the kitchen, it's a help for cooking, dining, and hanging out.

† Light and traffic flow freely through the new space, which gained windows and a sitting nook when absorbed a side porch.

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PROFESSIONAL CONTRACTOR

the key details

◀ **Custom shutters** above a deep window still invite in light while helping to screen the view of a neighbor's house. See *Shutter Products* or *Robert American Shutter*.

lots more ideas

See how other homeowners solved their kitchen design dilemma at houzz.com/ideas/2012



◀ **Beardboard panels** and grayish green slate add cottage charm to the island's cupboards. Choose *English Country* or *Madagascar* America.



▶ **A built-in wine rack** occupies one of the island's corners. It's deep enough to store bottles but isn't overly bulky.



▶ **The island's top** is 8 feet thick and made of a butcher block. A slab of live-edge stone is an oversize bar pull. Choose block *Billy Buck* Bar pull America.



▶ **Undercabinet stone veneer** provides a warm glow to the sink. White subway tile gives the backsplash a clean look. Choose *Amber* BZA, *Tin* Kona Tile.



pro advice
STEVE FULP, KITCHEN DESIGNER, COLUMBIA, MD

"Insert cabinet doors can take exposed hinges, a detail that really adds character to a period-style kitchen."

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of existing tuberculosis, fungal, bacterial, viral, or parasitic infection, or ocular herpes simplex may result in lower bone mineral density. This may be a problem for people who already have a higher chance of low bone density (osteoporosis).

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before + after:
bath

Timeless update

A faded pink bath becomes a well-organized space with period touches and accents of blue and white tile. by DANIELLE BLUMKELL • Photography by DEBORAH WATSON/WWW.DWELLSTYLING.COM

When a house has only one bath, remodeling can wreak havoc with daily routines. Steve and Laura McElhenny, owners of a 1941 bungalow in Jacksonville, Florida, lived with their single bath's cracked pink tile for five long years before calling in contractor Dean Celano and then asking neighbors for temporary bath privileges. Celano gutted the space, added parts of a shower and bath—including space that held a nonworking chimney and half-facing open shelves—and shifted the doorway. Remodeling allowed the toilet to move to a better spot, while the sink gained its own alcove and a smaller tub opened up floor space. To give the bath a timeless, eclectic style, Laura chose a contemporary light fixture and oak, ceramic subway tile, and traditional penny rounds in white and blue, using them to cover the sink wall from floor to ceiling. Three weeks later tub and toilet paid off. Says Laura: "It's exactly as I pictured it: the perfect combination of cherry and useful."

Before: The bath was small and lined in dated, dingy pink. **After:** Enlarged and belined with blue and white tile and a wall hanging, the space has more function and a new mood.



[before]



PHOTOGRAPH BY DEBORAH WATSON/WWW.DWELLSTYLING.COM

before + after: bath

the key details

Blue penny
tiles replaced
black ones—gridded
out one by one
from door not
looking-in to end
the shower pattern
around a custom
bath. Floor tile
Marble tile



1 The tub enclosure
is set off by a shower curtain
instead of a glass
enclosure, which is repeated in
an accent border around the
room. Double not Signature
Hardware Shower fittings
Harrington Brass

4 The slim toilet, its tank
just 27 1/2 inches wide, makes
the most of space borrowed
from the hall and a bedroom
closet. Toilet Kohler



3 Open shelves, finished with
blue paint and fitted with
two brackets. Fill a space once
occupied by a nonworking
shower. Shelves with Paint
Shower Hardware a Open Unit

before + after

Arranging parts of wall and shower allows the
bath's only toilet to grow from 39 to 49 square
feet. Together with reworking and plumbing
the enlargement led to a more functional layout

1 Moved one wall
out 5 inches, taking over a
sliver of a bedroom closet.

2 Replaced the
perfect sink with a
wall-mount basin fitted with a
towel rack and storage shelf



3 Added space by
moving out another wall
2 feet into the hallway

4 Shifted the door
further down the wall to
create a new, less visible spot
for the toilet flange in the closet
than above with open shelves
that takes the place of a
nonworking shower

5 Swapped the 5-foot
tub for one 4-foot-long to
absorb the door swing

colorful coins

Find 17 variations of penny
round tile in *ShowerStone*
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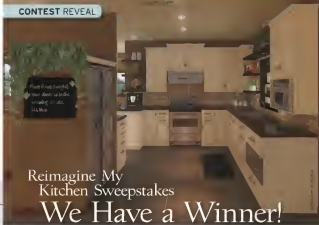


Silence is a Bosch virtue. That's why the new line of Bosch dishwashers is engineered to be the quietest in the U.S.* Starting with a solid innated base, Bosch engineers added three layers of sound-deadening insulation and a suspension motor, measures that effectively eliminate noise caused by mechanical vibrations. That in turn makes some units up to 30 percent quieter than comparable models. At Bosch, we believe in engineering quiet, and in the sweet sounds of silence. www.bosch-home.com/us



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CONTEST REVEAL



Reimagine My Kitchen Sweepstakes We Have a Winner!

When *This Old House* invited our readers to tell us about their dream kitchens, we received **82,209** entries for a chance to win a reimagination by an NKBA-certified designer, a professional 3-D rendering, all new appliances from **Bosch**, and a new sink and faucet from **Moen**. We are pleased to introduce you to our winner and take you along for the virtual makeover of her kitchen!



Jeoni Lee, CKD, CBD, CAPS
NKBA—Kitchen Bath & Home

For more than 20 years, **Units and Pot Correll's kitchen** has served them well as they raised seven children to adulthood. But the appliances and overall style are sorely outdated, and the flow through the room is not conducive to their large family gatherings.

To reimagine the Correll kitchen, we turned to NKBA-certified designer Jeoni Lee of KBN—Kitchen Bath & Home. "This room is really the command center of the home," says Lee. "Our goal was to select smarter, sleeker appliances, open up the main traffic area, and take advantage of some of the natural light in adjacent rooms while adding illumination for general needs. We needed to create more storage and a better flow without completely taking the kitchen down to the studs." To help them achieve a new look with minimal cost, "I kept the sink and range in the same locations. We concealed the outlets and switches just under the wall cabinet using

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From Old to Bold

The plain white walls were definitely showing their age, and the dark cabinets made the room feel dated. In Lee-Ann's Vintage Green cabinets to brighten the room, and brushed nickel hardware to complement the new stainless-steel appliances. The walls are now a warm, inviting brown, and as intimate the backdrops with color and interest.



angled power strips. This allowed us to create a statement backsplash with no interruption to our design. Countertops and open shelving in dark walnut create a rich contrast to the cream-colored cabinetry. LED lighting was added over all counter work areas, and the sink using energy-efficient puck and miniature linear lighting. And moving the refrigerator opened up the flow of traffic, giving better access from dining areas as well as full use by the cook."

When the time came to select their new appliances, Lee says the Cavettis based their decision on their family's lifestyle and love of entertaining family and friends. "The Bosch French door refrigerator keeps everything easily accessible, so you don't have to bend over to get into the crisper drawers. The warming drawer is something they are looking forward to using when all the kids are home for the holidays. The integrated dishwasher was chosen because they found the fact that it can blend in with the cabinetry visually appealing. And the Bosch dishwasher is so quiet, they can continue entertaining and having conversations—they won't even know this one is running. The new Moen double-bowl stainless-steel undermount sink and Annabelle faucet with Spot Resist™ resist fingerprints and water spots for easy cleanup. The finishing touch: The Bosch Serenata Gourmet Coffee Maker gives them a great cup of coffee, right at home."

"We have attempted to reorganize and functionalize our space on several occasions, yet we inevitably find ourselves looking up our heads," says Linda. "You did a fantastic job of interpreting what we would like to do with our dark and cramped kitchen area. I really like the way you opened it up."

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The average family washes 1,300 dishes a year. Choose your faucet wisely.



A warm, welcoming dining space for \$1,474

A blank box becomes an inviting gathering spot with new paint, molding, trim, and furniture. *by JESSICA KAPLAN*



BEFORE: The room had a bland paint job and few architectural features. **AFTER:** New crown and crown molding and old house chairs to the existing black trim.

the project tally

- Hired a company to mount wood shutters in the room's large window \$200
- Hung crown. Added paint molding below an existing chair rail to create a wood wainscote effect \$200
- Unfaded with white paint and a traditional tone with gray blue walls \$40
- Took down a complete dining set for six from two separate Craigslist sales \$425
- Purchased a sideboard on sale \$330
- Downloaded four free balcony chairs and set them off with IKEA frames \$60
- Added a chandelier and linen shades to match a set of lamps on the sideboard \$249

total **\$1,474**



When a whole house needs work, often there's no better place to tackle than a high-traffic area. For J.K. Plummer and her husband, the dining room in their 1983 Colonial Revival first hill. With a kitchen short on eating space, they needed a dining spot for regular meals as well as entertaining, so they wanted to give it a "formal air but casual feel." The baseboard floor and baseboards were in good shape, so the couple turned to the walls, rolling a gray-blue above the chair rail before adding crown molding. Wall frames made of painted molding glued in place created a low-cost wainscoting. All of the trim and the lower portion of the walls were coated with a white semi-gloss to complement newly installed shutters, and wood furniture warmed up the room's cool tones. A new chandelier and a pair of lamps, and together by their natural-fiber shades, add a soft glow to complete the transformation. Trade deal without being cold or snaky, the space now gets a lot of use. Says J.K., "We feel comfortable in the room, and it's perfect for our dinner parties."



ALL NEW EPISODES

Tune in as we continue renovation on one of our oldest project houses yet—a 300-year-old Georgian home listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



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price
wise

Wall-mount medicine cabinet

Behind the mirrored doors of these vintage-style storage units are details that help explain a marked difference in price. BY DEBORAH TALAMON Photography BY ANDREW MCALICE

Equal parts decorative and utilitarian, the classic wall-hung medicine cabinet literally stands out as a world of increased visual interest. These two have beveled exterior doors with the click of a spring-loaded latch, and open to reveal a pair of adjustable glass shelves. The budget version is a bit taller, and the high-end one is heavier. Read on for other differences that may point to the best fit for your look and budget. ➤

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IS IT FOR YOU?

Stylish in white, adjustable glass shelves, solid brass hardware and a mirror-clad interior.

materials

Made from lacquered solid brass and stainless steel. Shelves are 1/2-inch-thick tempered glass. Latches pull them pocket-finished brass, deep forged for more durability.

details

Shelving inside is custom-laminated stainless steel. Heavy-duty hinges are brass-plated. The heavy-duty brass latches are also pocket-finished brass, and are mounted, giving door a flush fit. Latches slightly rounded for a comfortable hand, feature brass-tone brushed finish.



Solid back has a 24-inch aluminum extrusion molding. Shelf weight limit: four pounds. Dimensions include depth. Info also at www.restorationhardware.com | 800.451.9292

Budget

Zenith Products CZ-024N, 24" x 12"

22 1/2" H x 24 1/2" W x 20 1/2" D Shelf depth: 6 1/2" Weight: 23 lbs.

\$109+

IS IT FOR YOU?

If you want a solid cabinet for the most and a slightly more contemporary profile.

materials

Made from painted MDF, backing is extra thin. Two adjustable shelves are 1/2-inch-thick tempered glass. Hinges and latches use steel with a chrome finish.

details

Doorset mirror lines the back of the door. Mirrored profile inside contemporary. Painted finish is suitable for sandblasting. Hinges are brass-plated and is surface-mounted. Latches are brass-plated and are mounted on the door. Latch is slightly padded with foam.



materials

1/2-inch-thick mirror-clad backing. Two painted steel adjustable shelves are 1/2-inch-thick tempered glass. Hinges and latches are brass-plated and are mounted on the door. Latch is slightly padded with foam.

Handmade holiday dining-room decor

DIY touches, from a textured table runner to turned wood candlesticks, lend this spirited eating area welcome warmth. Here's how to create a similar space in your home

by JESSICA DOBELL-FROENK - Photograph by JAMES CARRISSE

One great money-saving way to turn your everyday dining area into a festive spot for winter celebrations? Rev up your DIY skills. The cheerful room shown here features seven handcrafted projects—including a quilted runner and birch-bark-wrapped candlesticks—most of which you can assemble in less time than it takes to set the table. Coincided with weathered wood furniture, rustic accessories, and colorful pops of green and orange, they create an inviting space that captures the warmth of the holiday season. Learn how to adapt these creative ideas for your house. ■



goin' sack pillows

These printed cushions, bordered with salvaged burlap head bags, add a graphic touch to seating. \$40 to \$50; etsy.com

framed art

Indulge in a little holiday nostalgia by displaying vintage Christmas postcards in classic frames. Cards from the 1920s and 1930s add a touch of whimsy. \$15; etsy.com



simple wreath

Handmade from preserved or dried grass or twigs, this wreath is a simple yet elegant touch. \$40; etsy.com



turned candlesticks

Take table legs and banisters from the floor to the ceiling by turning them into candlesticks. Use a pencil to draw the 1/2-inch deep holes for the candles. The screw that comes with the banister will secure it in place. Finish by staining the wood a bright hue. Furniture legs and feet: \$5 to \$15 each, and Mirrow stool: \$11; etsy.com

get this look for less



mini trees

For just a few dollars, you can get your holiday decorating and roomy in metal baskets. Tree: from \$40; White Feeds Market: Pot: \$3; galenandpot.com



wood confetti

Take the playful from seasonal and print out your stencil template (sketch house.com/under300). Trace onto 1/2-inch plywood. Cut with a sharp sand then prime and spray paint in your favorite color for a subtle glow. Spray paint: \$7; sketchhouse.com



tree-trunk platforms

Decorate coffee tables with sturdy wood slices. Find them online or cut your own from a felled tree (except for logs that) \$10 to \$15 each; urbansawdust.com



burlap runner

A clever way to anchor a table this day is to use a simple burlap runner. Measure the length of the table and cut the burlap into a strip. Mark stripes lengthwise down both sides of the burlap with painter's tape and tie with metallic fabric paint. Burlap: \$4 per yard; shop-holidaystyle.com; Paint: \$2 each; paintedline.com

earthy tableware

Complement your rustic look with plates and cutlery that have a holiday natural look. Green floral plates: \$3 each; porcel.com. Olive wood flatware: \$20 per five-piece setting; olivedeferred.com



Sponge on color, depth, and texture

Layers of colored glaze can do wonders for a flat wall

By DICK HAGEDORN • Photography by WENDY T. WEBER

"Applying additional color on a painted wall is a classic technique, with an effect that depends on the colors you choose," says decorator painter Ingrid Leno. "Here, I wanted to mimic a steel wall that had started to rust." To start, she put down a medium-gray base coat. Then she mixed equal parts rust-color stain latex with clear glaze, which lightens the color. Leno wiped out a wet sponge, dipped it in the colored glaze, squeezed out the excess, and patted this way and that. "When the pattern was dry, she patted on a mix of clear glaze and dark gray, making sure the base and rust colors peeked through. "Colors that come together naturally work well—more green and garden-um gray, for example, plus yellow if you like—and layering them creates this interesting look," says Leno. Experiment on paper board and get a feel for it. Then check the effect while you work on the wall as color and texture interact. ■

essential tool

A natural sea sponge with natural holes. In different sizes, allows you to vary the pattern by how long it is you pat. One is perfect for larger glazes.



PAINT: Base: a Dark Storm Cloud (base coat). New Penny (first glaze coat) and Cracked Pepper (second glaze coat)

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Please see the next page for Patient Information about JALYN



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Breaking up a brick box

A new roofline and porch, plus a fresh siding strategy, provide a major curb appeal boost

by DRECHAGERMAN • Illustration by SHAWARDIGITAL



[before]

"I think all the different types of brick is what makes it so weird looking," says Rosetta Quillen of the patchwork ranch she shares with her husband, Ed, near Pittsburgh. "We're both artists, but I'm just not sure what can be done."

To find out, we enlisted designer Brian Moran, a founding partner of Onesta Group in Hatboro, Pennsylvania. "If the brick isn't gorgeous, so using it selectively makes it more special," says Moran. Picking up one of the brick colors, he wrapped upper sections in light-green siding to help it feel less heavy. The major addition, however, is the neighborhood rare porch, landscaped with Craftsman columns supporting a ground-level gable. A wider gable roof the porch to the garage and works with the structure's extended horizontal design. But that change highlights the height above the garage, so Moran added a metal shed roof to encourage the vertical element. "The gables are critical to renovating this house because it had so much porosity," he says. Now it does. "It looks great!" says Rosetta. "We love the splash of color and what he did with the siding. We never would have thought of that."



Putting off the late winter glass the new siding is like getting a natural finish in less than the existing brick windows.

Finishing touches

Craftsman II is a bit both design from that style hangs nicely on the bones of this low-slung house. >



siding

Affordable and durable vinyl siding in a variety of colors makes for a savvy upgrade. CertainTeed from \$1.20 per square foot.



columns

Swedish glass in a rustic natural quality that fits with the Craftsman style. Cedar and white-painted. Craftsman II \$45.



garage door

The wood grain finish complements the surrounding brick and makes the front door stand out. Craftsman II \$45.



garage door

The wood grain finish complements the surrounding brick and makes the front door stand out. Craftsman II \$45.

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Make a wine rack from a planter box

This compact storage piece stands out from the pack—and won't blow your holiday gift budget. *by ROBERT STROMBERG • Photographs by JORDAN DILLON*



For complete
instructions, turn
the page

"It's the season for receiving bottles of red and white as host gifts, so it's critical to have a spot to store your stash. But when we shopped for a small wine rack, we were, in a word, unimpressed. Wire models felt cheap, Tinker Toy-like wood options looked rickety. What's a wine lover to do? DIY is, of course. The Old Flower general contractor Tom Salvo showed us how to transform a wood planter and plywood into a simple wine rack that takes up little counter or table space. Even better: You can put it together in less time than it takes to cook the average holiday meal! And that's something to drink to."

*Photo: Stroma's Four Seasons
DIY by Ed Tap (2) and wood
planter: Tom Salvo, Plant
Designer, Old Flower Plant
and Garden Center, Inc.*



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Cost: from \$40, depending on the cost of the planter, plus paint. **Time:** 2 hours. **Difficulty:** easy. Drilling the holes and assembling the pieces is simple and straightforward.

HOW IT'S DONE

Make a wine rack

We used a wood planter with a lip that has a beek side that serves as a nailing and gluing surface for the bottle supports. If your planter doesn't have a lip, nail 1x2 strips to the inside walls of the planter to make an attachment surface. For hardwood planters, assemble the parts with construction adhesive instead of nails and glue.



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1. Cut plywood for the bottle supports. Knock out the bottom of the planter and remove any nails. Cut two pieces of plywood to the inside dimensions of the planter. Cut 1 inch off the top of the rear support so that it can be fitted into place, as shown in Step 7. On the front support, mark the center of the first bottle hole by drawing lines from corner to corner to form an X.



2. Cut the front support into strips. Mark off strips of the desired width and spacing on the front support. (Ours were 2 inches wide.) Use a miter saw to cut along the lines, set aside the pieces you're not using. Cut spacer blocks from a 1x2 to the desired gap between the strips. (Ours were 2 inches apart.)

3. Mark the centers of the bottle holes. On all four legs of the X, mark a point that's 2 1/2 inches in from each edge of the support. These will be the center points of the bottle holes. Check to ensure that the marks form a square, with enough space to cut all five bottle holes.



4. Install the front support strips. Nail the lowest front support strip to the inside of the lip. Lay spacer blocks on top of it, then nail the next support strip in place above it. Repeat until all strips are installed. Remove the spacer blocks.

5. Cut the bottle holes. Put both supports on a piece of scrap wood, with the bottoms and sides flush and the hole markings facing up, and clamp the pieces to a work table. Center the hole saw over the middle of the X. Drill through both supports. Repeat for the remaining holes.



6. Install the rear support. Apply wood glue along the perimeter of the expanded side of the rear support. Tip the piece into the planter and pull it snug against the inside of the lip so that the glue makes contact.

7. Paint the interior surfaces. To unify the materials and protect your wine collection from exposure to light, paint the interior surfaces of the planter and one side of the rear support in a dark color. (We chose black.)



8. Finish the wine rack. Use a damp rag to wipe away any excess glue from Step 7. Stand the planter upright on its back while the glue dries. Caulk the joints with wood filler. Sand the entire assembly, and finish with primer and two coats of satin or semigloss paint.



kitchen floorboards and sheathing + box beams and wainscoting

Most of the old kitchen floor was pulled up, and an exterior wall was taken down, resulting in a stack of pine floorboards, subflooring, and sheathing in various widths and lengths. Tom and Joe looked the place over for a while, checking out the sheathing and subflooring. The longer ones will make for a better subfloor and the shorter ones will be used for the sheathing. "We want to make it look like a new floor," says Tom. The material is being used in several projects. ABOVE LEFT: To hide new pipes that run along the side of an exposed beam in the kitchen ceiling, Tom proposed leaving them in with old wood. Joe and Becky thought it was a good idea. Joe is now building these box beams to install when the ceiling is done. ABOVE RIGHT: In the family room, Tom will build wainscoting high enough to cover the base of the wall. The plan is still evolving, but we want to use boards of different widths, left unfinished," he says. The wood will cover the drywall, fastened to the studs.



chimney bricks and a wood post + new fireplace finishes

Reddy and Joe wanted the fireplace to look antique, not newly built. So Tom and his team worked to remove the brick from an 1800s chimney that was torn down in the kitchen, and use a wood post from a dismantled wall for the mantel. LEFT: Becky, Joe, and Tom inspect the bricks, testing every one that is crumbling or in poor shape. They sort the bricks by size and color as the work is done. Rather than ignore the concrete and mortar clinging with power washing, they plan to keep the brick a more authentic look. BELOW: Tom and Joe left the post against the fireplace to determine the correct height for the mantel. It will be installed on the left.



BEAR LEFT: Joe likes the marble looks on the post that will become the mantel, so they won't be painted off. "They speak to me because it's history," he says.

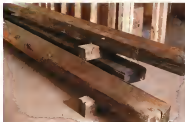
ABOVE: Wainscoting would have been historically accurate when this house was built, but it's not a pine floorboard," says Tom.

board-and-batten doors + pantry sliders

To add a vintage vibe to the new pantry off the kitchen, Joe and Becky are going to make it with sliders made from old doors. RIGHT: Several 19th-century board-and-batten binged doors were removed from the first and second floors. There were even a few spars in the attic. Two in good condition that are the same size and shape as the sliders will become the pantry sliders. A third door just showing will become the door for the laundry room, also off the kitchen. FAK: Right in the pantry's opening. Joe and Tom had the size of the sliders. Before installation, Tom and his crew will remove old hardware, fill nail holes, and sand, rough up the surface with coarse sandpaper, and prime and paint. For handles, Tom will either add vintage look metal ones or make some from salvaged lumber.



ABOVE: Because of their age, the pantry sliders are slightly bowed, so they'll be nailed on so covered track that will allow the bottom edges to move freely.



aged beams + decorative ceiling elements

The hardest-to-challenge kitchen, with its exposed beams, will open onto a new family room with a double-height, beamed ceiling. To protect the two spaces visually and bring down the sun's glare, Joe and Becky will place recessed lighting in the ceiling. The family vision is to create a look that is both historic and modern. ABOVE: A local reclaimed timber supplier helped the team find these 2x10 pine beams from a former train vehicle factory. Old structural timbers are usually compromised by rotting, insect damage, or other factors. So while they're not suitable to carry loads, they can be installed in a way that makes them look as though they're doing the work. ■



more salvage ideas

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Talk with your healthcare provider

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weekend
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Install wainscoting

Layer stock lumber and moldings to produce this classic architectural element

By JONACZAK/STAMPEDON • Photography by DIANE ROBY

Cost: \$175 for a 12-foot wall
Time: 15 hours
Difficulty: Difficult: Installing the pieces is easy enough, but creating molding returns demands precision

We're the last to say if you need it, a can of paint. But for a room revamp that brings dimension and lasting color to plain walls, nothing beats a traditional wainscot of richly layered wood joints. How they're put together may seem reasonable to the average DIYer, but once you peel back the layers of this architectural union, you'll find that each step is doubly so, if a bit tricky at times. See for yourself on the pages that follow, as The Old House senior technical editor Mark Powers assembles this paneled wainscot piece by piece—moving a pro-worthy project onto a can-do list for you.



For complete instructions, **hack the plan**



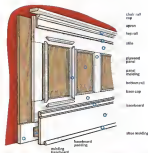
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Day-to-day timeline

FRIDAY Prep the wall and determine the panel widths (Steps 1)

SATURDAY Install the panels, rails, stiles, and baseboard (Steps 2-4)

SUNDAY Install the chair-rail parts, base moldings, and panel trim (Steps 5-7)



tools

utility knife

dry line

chalk line or

straightedge to mark

cut in the plywood

4-foot level

circular saw

caulk gun

shoe finisher

sail glue

miter saw

Block-cutting saw

to cut out existing

moldings

Speed Square

chisel

materials

painter's tape

1/2-inch plywood

Get enough to cover the

entire area of your

interlocking with the

planning vertically

2x4 for the stiles

2x5 for the corner rails

2x6 for the bottom rail

2x6 for the top rail and

baseboard. Get enough

to cover each wall and

allow for the chair rail

cap. Choose a profile

deep enough to extend

beyond the layered

depth of the plywood

rail and apron

caulking for the apron

panel molding to trim

the panels

base-cap molding

shoe-molding

panel adhesive

2 1/2-inch finishing nails

to install the cables, rails

baseboard apron and

chair rail

2 1/2-inch finishing nails

to install the panel base

cap and shoe moldings

wood glue

wood filler

adhesive latex caulk

Note: Choose primed

boards and molding

to save time

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1



1. Prep the walls

A. Remove the base cap. Composite board makes a good ruler and can stay put as filler behind the new baseboard if you remove any cap molding. Score its seams with a utility knife and start at one end, work it loose with a pry bar.

B. Lay out the walls. Decide your waistcoat height, and run a level line of painter's tape across the wall above it. Divide the width of the wall by the number of panels you desire, and use that measurement to make hash marks on a strip of wood longer than the wall. You just made a swing-stroke tool that maintains even spacing as you adjust it diagonally to fit the panels onto a wall. You're off to a good start, but each wall has one more side than square, so first put out the wall closer corner with one stile plus the thickness of the adjacent wall is width of. But the over stock against this blocking, lower the other end until a hash mark lines up with the wall's far edge, and tape it in place. Use a level to transfer the hash marks to the painter's tape, and then, which gives you the distance from the outside edge of one stile to the inside edge of the next.

2



2. Install the panels and top rail

A. Install the panels. Make a level line around the entire room. Set at the height of your wainscoting minus the height of the chair rail cap. Use a circular saw to cut 1/4-inch plywood (grain oriented vertically) to fit between the old baseboard and the level line. It's okay to have a little wiggle room. Tap the panels so that the seams will be covering the stiles, keeping in mind that the flush marks locate the edge of a stile—*not* the center. Apply panel adhesive to the back of each panel with a caulk gun and press it in place.
B. Install the top rail. Using a stud finder, mark the location of studs on the plaster or stone. Cut the 1 1/2-top rail to the length of the wall using a circular saw. Have a helper hold the top rail up to the level line. Using a nailgun and working from one end to the other, nail through the rail into the studs with 2 1/2-inch finishing nails.

3. Position and secure the stiles

A. Install the stiles. To determine how long to cut your stiles, first measure the distance between the top rail and the old baseboard at three points. Use the shortest one and subtract the height of the bottom rail stock. Set up a stop block on a miter saw and cut all the stiles to that length. Then cut a scrap spacer block to your panel width marked on the tape, minus the width of one stile and use it to place the stiles uniformly. Apply panel adhesive to the back of each one and attach using a nail gun and 2 1/2-inch finishing nails.

B. Trim and install the corner stiles. Where two stiles meet at the corners, the overlapped piece must be wider by the depth of the stock. Rip a wider stile from larger stock for each corner. Butt the wider stile against the adjacent wall and glue and nail it in place. Then butt the adjacent wall stile into the first, as shown, and glue and nail it in place.

C. Cut wainscoting trim. To fit stiles behind existing molding, like the header of a window or stool, use a flush-cutting saw to cut the hewn wheel at exactly the wall. Use the thickness of the stile to guide this saw, as shown, and cut toward the casing. Use a chisel to knock out the block and clean up the notch.

3



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For more in-depth information on installing baseboards, go to diyweekend.com/weekendremodel.

4. Attach the bottom rail and baseboard

A. Install the bottom rail. Grub the bottom rail up against the ends of the studs and wedge shims between it and the baseboard to tighten the joints. (The new baseboard will cover any gaps.) Nail through the rail and into the studs using 2½-inch finishing nails.

B. Scribe and rip the baseboard. Nail scraps from the ¼-inch plywood to put out the existing baseboard and bring its face flush with that of the bottom rail. Set the baseboard in place and shim the lower end until the piece is level. Measure the largest gap between the bottom of the baseboard and the floor. Add about a scrap block of the size plus ½ inch. Run the block along the floor against the baseboard with a pencil on top to scribe a curve in the piece, as shown. Rip the baseboard using a circular saw.

C. Install the baseboard. To make sure the rail and baseboard are parallel, cut a spacer to match the amount of bottom rail you want exposed. Use it to position the baseboard while nailing it in place, as shown. The shoe molding will cover any gap along the foot.

5

5. Add the apron

A. Cut the apron. Each run of shelving will either turn a corner or finish with a toe kick. For the end-or-meet an opening. At an opening, trim with a deep-casing. The apron can simply slide into the casing. Otherwise, you'll have to create what is called a return to dress the cut. Miter the run at 45 degrees as if for an outside corner, then miter a second piece that will meet that 45 and de-square into the wall or casing—turning the profile around the corner (see inset photo). Just be sure to cut the return in reverse and find that back is made much easier when working with a long piece.

B. Install the apron. Align the top edge of the apron flush with the top edge of the rail and nail it in place using 2½-inch finishing nails. On any run with a return, nail the run in place first and glue the return into its slot with adhesive caulk.

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6



7. Miter and install the trim

A. Install the base cap and shoe moldings. Miter corner joints. Position the shoe molding on the floor against the baseboard and the base cap on the top edge of the baseboard. Nail them to the baseboard with a nail gun and 1½-inch finishing nails, working your way around the room. (Anywhere a return is required, make it just as you did for the apron in Step 5A.)

B. Trim-out the panels. Miter panel molding at 45 degrees to meet the mitered edge of the panels. If your mitering is difficult, like ours, just glue it in place. For thicker trim, miter and place with a nail gun and 1½-inch finishing nails. Once all the pieces are installed, fill all nail holes with wood filler and all joints with latex caulk. Let dry. Sand the surfaces, prime the plywood, and finish the project with several coats of paint. ■



6. Cap the chair rail

A. Grinkle the returns. If the end of a return is between the shoe and register, a return apron miter the end and seal for an inside corner. Then enter and cut a return to terminate the molding profile at the wall or ceiling. For the cap piece, you'll want to glue the returns to the runs to create an assembly as shown.

B. Attach the returns. Depending on your existing casing, the chair rail may need to be notched. If so, hold the chair rail in place, scribe the shape of the molding, and use a hand plane to cut the notch. Notching the existing casing to accept the cap as shown will give you a neat joint.

C. Install the chair rail cap. Once your returns are assembled, miter any ends that finish at a corner. Set the cap in place at caulk, and nail into the ledge formed by the apron and upper molding with a nail gun and 2½-inch finishing nails.

7



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How great would it be if someone invented a bath fan that stayed on until the humidity's gone? Someone did, so you'll see on page 94. And wouldn't it be nice if someone could make energy-efficient CFLs more attractive? Check out page 94. While we're at it, shouldn't there be a faster way to select mailings for your wallet? We refer you to page 98. Okay, but what about those renters that require no mortar to install? It's here too—along with many other not-so-humble products for your abode. One hundred, to be exact, many of them unique, all of them terrific in their own way. TOH editors hunted high and low to find them because we know that people who love old homes also appreciate new ways to fix them up. Which is to say, in the following pages, we hope you'll find as much inspiration for next year's project calendar as we do.

Best New Home Products 2011



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SILVER

Rock-solid surfaces

We all want granite countertops—and that first glass of merlot sips. Lovely stone, but so much TLC? That's why we're enamored of these dead regents that pre-own the look without the hassle. The lightly etched-for-life of the new mineral perfection Formica's Freedom[®] Collection (\$35-\$55 per square foot, formica.com) catch light like the real thing. Corian's Private Collection (\$100-\$150 per square foot, corian.com) features eight, inspired hues that marry granite's bubble veining and spalling with solid-surface's durability. And not to be outdone, Silstone's easy-to-clean Galactic Series (\$54-\$102 per square foot, silstone.com) comes with earthy splatters that nod up to water and tear without needing to be sealed.

Periscope faucet

ELNATE EXT PULL-DOWN KITCHEN FAUCET BY FRISTAR



Now there's no need to bring the glass way into a trade-only showroom to swim a length-adjustable kitchen faucet—Lower's will do. Meet the first off the shelf kitchen faucet that telescopes to three different heights. Switches for splash-free rinsing and up to 30 inches to follow a path. \$199. Lower.com



Prismatic pendant

WINDFOLD PENDANT LIGHT BY HUDSON VALLEY LIGHTING



Forget plain glass globes. We're ready to go sleek over the sink or kitchen island with a set of three strong fixtures that update 19th-century Holophane-style glass by capping it with lightweight metal hemispheres. From \$299. hudsonvalleylighting.com

Bubbles on demand

ICE2 SODA STARTER KIT BY SODAStream



We claim it. Now SodaStream's all get any better, but it did. Now, patented chip technology lets you dial in your desired level of carbonation. \$150. sodastreamusa.com



Pro cooktop

DISTINCTIVE SERIES BY Dacor



This 30-inch continuous-grate gas cooktop features an up-to-burner that can cook out 18,000 BTUs or settle into a gentle simmer. Dacorbetter you can snap-up a coordinated suite including the oven, dishwasher, microwave, and fridge line. Save for under \$15,000. \$1,999 for the cooktop, dacor.com

Get this now

IF FIRE-FIRE EXTINGUISHER BY KODOL



This fire slayer doesn't blast. It blankets. Store it on a stove-top-grate fire and it smotheres flames with a noxious powder that is technically edible (though we won't say it's tasty). Small enough to stow under the counter and light enough to hold one-handed. It's a no-brainer. \$29. Alamo.com



Easy on the eyes, too

SEASONS REFINISHABLE MAT COVERS BY WELLNESSMATS



A sponge mat is one of those things you don't think of if you're standing to peel a washcloth of green chives. It's the homeliness with a performance pedigree. See over that, say go straight in the laundry. \$40 for the cover (it's \$120 for the mat). wellnessmats.com



Deep breather

VENTURA VENT HOOD BY ZEPHYRUS



The latest new production range deserves—dominate. Actually—ventilation just do power. This breakthrough model's DC motor uses 75 percent less energy than its AC equivalent, making for less noxious get-there. 775 cubic feet per minute (cfm) of air, so nobody has to know about that strong fair-bell apartment. From \$1,299. zephyrus.com



Pasta enabler

WILL MOUNTED POT FILLER, BY TAY FAUCETS



The luminosity of this solid brass spout captured our attention and not only for its rose-gold appearance. It reflects a new electrifying color finish developed by Premier Copper which offers a lifetime warranty to go along with claims that it's as durable and scratch-resistant as chrome. Two handles let you choose how to contribute to the life of your enthusiasm. \$299. firstcopper.com



Brand-new neutral

RANGE BY KORNER



We perked right up at this fresh alternative to white fixtures and finishes. A class between warm and light, even it's a perfect ground among Korner's finish options. So adding a hint of warmth won't break the bank. \$499. korner.com

APPS

KITCHEN DIAL kitchenaid.com

Match up grills on one dial with temperature on another and we've pretty much made meals that require no recipe. Sticky fingers? Use the phone to turn the dial. Free for iOS.

iCABINET cabinetapp.com

Target the right paper and make a move. Drag and drop cabinets and appliances into place to build your own dream kitchen—no busy lines or it takes. \$4.99 for iPad.

Touch₂O[®] Technology.

ONE MORE REASON THAT DELTA IS MORE THAN A FAUCET.



see what Delta can do

Shop for savings today at
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FREE SHIPPING ON DELTA TOUCH₂O[®] FAUCETS.





BATH

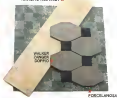
Timeless glow

GLIMMERING MED. CENTURY MODERN WALL BRACKET BY RELAXATION

Nothing wakes up faster quite like a dimmable light fixture. And this fixture comes a step for its softened, hourglass curves. Control shades come with a brushed-aluminum finish plate, making this lamp a show stopper whether used in a pair to flank a mirror or installed horizontally above it. \$175 relaxation.com



ARTIFICIAL TILE KNOT BY



Tile goes tactile

We're glad to throw our weight behind the trend in textured tile. Artistic Tile's Knot (\$9.25 per square foot for 6 by 24 inch plastic, embossed tiles) mimics the natural irregularities of cut lumber and provides slip resistance. Porcelanosa's rough-hewn Petra wall tile (\$12 per square foot for 16 by 16 inches; porcelainized with a matte finish) comes in large pieces that create a seamless look. Subtly textured octagons also make with smooth black squares in the Waller. Zeigler is a smooth, rounded tile. \$145 per square foot. wallerzeigler.com

Repro soaker

57 VERSATILES TUB BY THE BATH WORKS

A tub modeled after an antique cast-iron tub that's a man in a hat because it's lighter? Low it. Paint or polish its verdant aluminum alloy exterior and order its enamel lining in just about any color. Hand cast in England, this reproduction weighs 100 pounds less than the original—and supposedly costs half the price. \$2,750 as shown. thebathworks.com



Hello, smartfani!

WIRELESS VOICE DETECTION HUB BY PANASONIC

Bath fans, fix adult's excess steam and mist, it's so long as they're in. This is the first one that switches on when someone enters and stays on as long as it detects high humidity. From \$52. Panasonic.com/verba

Hands-free

ANDERSON RAUCET WITH TOUCHED BY BYONDA



You don't even have to touch the fancy new champagne bronze faucet to turn it on. Just wave a hand within 4 inches of it and a sensor that picks up static electricity starts the water flowing. \$415. deltafaucet.com



Duo flush

DUAL-FLUSH SYSTEM BY FLUIDMASTER



Why split up on a new dual-flush toilet when you can retrofit yours? The toilet is still the biggest water hog in the house, and this snap-on system costs only what a bowl-toilet-clear the bowl—full flusher. Replaces full flush for solids. \$120. fluidmaster.com

Space-saver

ULLAMING BINK AND CABINET BY KIRA



This compact vanity—about 16 inches wide and deep—takes the place of a tiny powder room without sacrificing storage like a traditional pedestal sink does. \$274. kira.com



Step right in

MAKER'S DESIGNER GRAY RISE

Thanks to baby boomers' clamoring to age in place, universal design is starting to look pretty sharp. Maker's Designer Gray Rise, a new shower home look. It's shaped and sized so you don't need to hit a stool. Maker's wall-mount Fold Down Shower Seat (\$145) means you can sit in a solid look. proves that "ADA compliant" can translate to "slightly. Jaxxon International's EZ360 shower base (\$1,570, jaxxoninternational.com) has no lip on which to trip and a linear stainless steel drain to divert overflows.



APPS

DIY CALCULATOR

Enter a room's length, circumference and the number of windows and doors, and you'll get the amount of paint required to cover it. Delta wallpaper, tiles and more. 800.822.8222

2011

AMERICAN STANDARD TOILET CHALLENGE

Put the company's toilet against that you'll never dream of trying to flush—her dogs' molting hair. Enter bathroom waste. Why not? It's a challenge. 800.822.8222

Sometimes your hands could use a hand.
TOUCH₂O[®] TECHNOLOGY.



see what Delta can do

Renew and redo your kitchen
or bath for less.
ONE-STOP SHOPPING AT THE HOME DEPOT.





BUILDING PRODUCTS



Fab prefab

BY KLEINER

Staged steel beams and prefabricated panels arrive on a standard semi-trailer—and that's a relatively simple thought. That you can finally have the advantages of factory production in a residential design. From \$155,900. kleinerproducts.com

New old molding

CLASSICAL MOLDING CROWD BY KLEINER PRODUCTS



Besides enjoying the idea of molding whisper Great Hall to faithfully recreate 18th-century American profiles, what's deserving here is the catalog itself. It groups moldings by style, not profile. So it's a Greek Revival you're into, you'll find hundreds to choose from in the same section. www.kleinerproducts.com



Cozy as a foam pillow

ENHANCED GLASS-FREE INSULATION BY VOR-NOCHVERS

Best insulation made of recycled plastic bottles and virgin polyester, covers no-drip glass fibers and no need for a mask. It won't sag, and in R-13 batts provides an R-value of 4 per inch. 72 cents per square foot, vogelinsulation.com



Panels for the basement redo

BEST SCIENCE-INSPIRED EFFICIENT FINISHING SYSTEM BY ADO



Finishing the basement just got simpler thanks to interlocking EPS foam panels that plug right onto concrete walls, sealing you the choice of installing steel walls with vapor barriers. Tapout waterproofing to meet five codes. \$35 per square foot, adofinish.com



Stone that's

easy as pie
INSULATION IN FIDELITY



Finally a truly DIY stone veneer one that requires no mortar or trowel. We see it as a beautiful new way to replace vinyl siding or disguise older blocks. Or just give the house panel pieces to an artisan, accent wall, stand back and admire what looks like everyone else like dry-laid natural stone. \$9.99 per square foot, modulstone.com



If walls could breathe

AIR-LEAKING STOPPERS BY CERTAINTEED



Let your walls do the air scrubbing with drywall that soaks up airborne nasties, such as VOCs and allergens, into harmless compounds and locks them into its gypsum core. Skip the oil-based paint since it would seal the surface. No biopore. Latex water goes to biopore wall cleaner anyway. About \$19 for a 4-by-8-foot sheet, certainteed.com



Pretty cool shingles

LANOMARK SOLAR PLATINUM SHINGLES BY CERTAINTEED



Heat-reflective gables on these shingles can turn back up to 40 percent of the sun's infrared radiation, and unlike most solar-reflective roofing—that is, the part that soaks up—they're available in dark colors. \$200 per 100-square-foot, certainteed.com



Brick by brick

ARCHITECT SERIES PORE HOUSE BY LEGO



Building this replica of the Ritten House, with its 2,215 pieces, gives you some area of the challenge. Frank Lloyd Wright's builder built in 1930 when building up the original 10,000-square-foot house in Hyde Park, Illinois. Just the second of the master's houses to be translated into interlocking plastic. \$700, lego.com

Deck building, simplified

THROUGH FASTENER BY FASTENMASTER



Replace carriage bolts, not to mention the nightmare of drilling pilot holes and tightening the bolts, with a specially designed screw that you drive straight into your deck, forget tightening the nut. \$25 for six 8-inch through bolts, fastenmaster.com



Color us pink

COLOR-UP PAINT 2 WHITE CHALK BY KREWEVIL



We're back waiting for this air-drying enhanced acrylic substrate. It goes on bubble gum pink and, as it dries, fades to white, giving a chalkboard effect. A good rule of thumb: just get better. \$3.99, krewevil.com



Snap-on window trim

EXTENSIVE TRIM SYSTEM BY ANDERSEN



This tough wood vinyl composite trim snaps right onto exposed frames or Andersen's 200, 400, and A Series windows and doors, eliminating measuring, miter cuts and nails. About \$10 per foot, andersenwindows.com



Hold the pilot holes

CAMO HOLES DRILL FASTENING SYSTEM BY NATIONAL NAIL CORP.



Lay down the fastest of hardwood deck boards in eight thanks to a newly developed screw with an auguring tip that helps cut wood as it goes. The spacing laid uniformly positions each board and directs the screws through the sides. \$100 for a kit to cover 200 square feet, camoholes.com

APPS



HOME DESIGN 3D

Download the Home Design 3D app and 3D visualize with your smartphone. Features and benefits include 3D visualization—the first time you see it. \$3.99 for iOS/Android, homedesign3d.com



BALUSTERPRO

Plans to estimate and handle dimensions, choose the configuration, and this app gives you the numbers of calculating baluster spacing. Available for iOS and Android

As intuitive as you are.

WATER WHEN YOU NEED IT. AND WHEN YOU DON'T.



see what Delta can do

Do it yourself or get it installed by our professionals.





OUTDOOR LIVING

Handy elegance

SOME TOPHAT GARDEN TOOLS FOR \$19.99 & \$21.99

Wired brasswood handles solid brass ferrules and an ergonomic grip allow for women's smaller hands tend to be garden tools the style and quality of hammers to be no surprise. That's why they're designed by the designer of contemporary furniture from the same collection. \$29-\$325 each. shovelhead.com



Not your average hosta

WHEELIE HOSTA BY NATURAL GARDEN

A big shout out to hosta lovers! The wheelie hosta is particularly thick leaved variety of one of the most plants to grow its white, curly leaves that curl back up. It's a great gift for a garden lover. \$20 for a 1-gallon plant. naturalgardens.com

The better (cordless) blower on the block

SEA RA CORDLESS BLOWER BY STIHL

Most battery powered blowers don't do much more than whisper to their debris. But this bad boy generates a stream of air that clocks in at 122 mph and moves 360 cubic feet per minute (cfm). That is, its 40-volt battery is comparable to an emissions spewing machine and at a neighbor friendly 54 decibels. \$300. stihlusa.com



A jungle gym for your vines

ANGLER'S HYPNOSIS BY TERRAZZELLIS

We couldn't resist this fresh take on the trellis. Handmade from powder coated steel, which will last for decades, these playful structures offer a new way to brighten up the garden. From \$279. terrazzellis.com



True brilliance

ALLISON KURDLE HEATER LAMP BY KNOX LIVING



Our favorite innovations are those that seem so obvious after the fact. Like this combination heater/lamp. A hidden propane tank fuels the long-necked, shrouded lamp and a rechargeable battery powers built-in LEDs, which illuminate the bulbous composite body. Many of seven colors you select via a remote. \$249. knoxliving.com



Portable party power

HYDROPORT PORTABLE INVERTER GENERATOR BY HYDRO



Prime spot for the stream entrance? Check. Needs? Got 'em. It's the only 100-watt inverter generator to power the flat-screen and the fridge—for the grilling show. It's 8 ft. x 4 ft. x 4 ft. in a tank of gas. It only it could drive you home too. \$800. cylindric.com



Flame on

WILLIAMS & SON'S GRILL BY CHAM BROS.

Not everyone wants or needs a monster outdoor kitchen. So Cham Bros. gives its stainless-steel technology to a size fit for parties. You can still get 12 burners under its easy to clean stainless-steel shell. \$500. chambros.com



Gotcha!

PEST & DISEASE DETECTIVE BY GARDENER'S SUPPLY COMPANY



We would be lost without this really cool visual encyclopedia of plant problems that makes identifying problems with your potted plants as easy as looking through a photo library. Free. gardenersupply.com



Easier-to-handle wheelbarrow

TOTAL CONTROL WHEELBARROW BY TRUE TEMPER



If you've ever lost hold of, say, a load of concrete, you'll appreciate the design of these new wheelbarrows handles as much as we do. The looped shape means you can change your grip as you dump, to keep things under control. \$70. aslowestadventurer.com



Now that's a deck chair

NOVAPLUS RECLINER BY LA-Z-BOY



This is the first well-priced upholstered outdoor recliner we've seen that's stylish and comfy enough to lug inside each year come football season. The chair's sturdy steel frame smoothes weather-resistant cushions that come in four colors and include a coordinating lumbar pillow. \$374. daybedoutdoor.com



Hush now, chain saw

POWERBLOW CORDLESS BLOW COUPEL (CHAIN SAW) BY GEMSON



How often do you get to bend over the chain saw? After a big storm? Maybe for a Halloween party? This one's 40 volt lithium ion battery won't discharge after long periods of inactivity, so there's no more coasting down a gas-powered engine to Mr. B's gutter. See Price \$400. discoipowerwork.com



Someone alert Monty Python

SOFTLINE SYSTEM BY VETECH



Sorry, but we already found the Holy Grail: a deck whose boards require no fasteners. Instead, 2x4 hardwood boards with grooved aluminum strips are simply mounted into the support of a pre-engineered deck whose beautiful, seamless joints are made from aluminum or steel—no nails, no screws, no fasteners. \$15 per square foot for gas. vtechdeck.com

APPS



LEAF SNAP: A free app that takes a pic of that annoying tree's leaves and tells you what they are. It's a great way to identify your plants. \$0. leafsnap.com



ORR'S TREE AND SHRUB FINDER: A free app that tells you what plants are best for your yard. It's a great way to identify your plants. \$0. orrstree.com

Get a helping hand in the kitchen.

TOUCH IT ON. TOUCH IT OFF.



see what Delta can do

Beautiful kitchen upgrades.

GREAT WAYS TO SAVE ON YOUR KITCHEN.



More saving. More doing.



HOME TECH



Better boom box

PLAYS BY SONOS

Introduce the first truly affordable Sonos a true wireless home stereo that streams digital tunes from the Internet or your digital music library to this powered speaker. Perfect for the kitchen window or garage workbench. \$299 for one. \$449 for wireless bridge across side.

Universal dimmer

IMAGINE TOGGLES C-4 DIMMER BY LUTRON



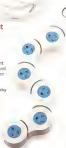
As the Internet truly shines out in January, this fancy switch tops our list of easy upgrades. Most notably, it handles finicky compact fluorescent lights at least a few at which you'll need until a full range of LED lights arrives. Get any relic incandescent you come across. \$25. lutron.com

Power twist

PHOT POWER FLEXIBLE POWER STRIP BY QUARRY



We give an A+ to the design studio, one who redesigned the surge protector. Joints between receptacles let it accommodate bulky power packs and plugs alike. Good work. John Zee. \$20. quarry.com



Man's new best friend

MINT PLUS AUTOMATIC FLOOR CLEANER, BY EVOLUTION ROBOTICS

His robot vacuum: there's the bump-and-grind approach, and there's this one. It tracks an infrared beam as the going to transpire at its location in your space, then sweeps or mops the floor (most runs corners and all plus its rectangular shape). From \$299. mintrobot.com

Burn, baby, burn

VIMMER 1800 FIREPLACE INSERT BY QUARRY FINE



Here's our kind of innovation: an upgrade that bolsters a home's traditional character with 21st-century features. Install the Vimmer in your most beguiling place. It features: lead it with a handle of wood, and watch it burn—for up to 12 hours! From \$2,799. quarryfine.com



Leak stopper

ARISAPAL EXIST SEALANT BY ARISAPAL



The average heating and cooling duct is about as airtight as a sieve, and today's macroscopic, which is why the ingenious leak plugger made the cut. A vinyl-acetate polymer, most pumped into ducts by pressurized air, is what is your thumb sealing your system. From \$2.00. arisapal.com

Rarefied air

ION AIR PURIFIER, BY HUMAHCAL



What's the point of purifying your air only to pollute it with ozone? This model produces no ozone: a first. It's also whisper-quiet, and its vacuumable filter captures 99 percent of airborne contaminants. \$799. iohair.com



Hon, did you turn off the...

MOULDER, BY THINKGOOD INC.



Stop this little guy between an outlet and any device that draws power when it's on: cordless box, phone charger, flat-screen, and it blocks the flow completely. Its software even lets you monitor and cut power remotely by a handy feature when you're halfway to Orlando. \$335 for five. thinkgood.com



Super-savers

2ND SERIES VINYL WINDOWS, BY PELLA



If you still have drafty windows, it's time to upgrade to these: the company's most energy-efficient. We appreciate the premium hardware options and argon-filled corner welds—a rarity in vinyl. From \$279. pella.com



A hot heater

PRESTIGE SERIES CONDENSING TANKLESS WATER HEATER, BY HENKEL



Tankless gas water heaters are already thrifty—also, 40 percent efficient—but a heat exchanger that absorbs heat from escaping exhaust squawks 54 percent out of this one. It'll even work with plumbaid. PWC Power \$1,200. henkel.com



Loud and proper

LOWE'S PHILIPPI 25-1000 WELP, CROCKFORD, BY HENKEL



This cherry-colored welp shows as a freestanding table, while secretly incorporating features designed to allow you to enjoy the built-in. It's a 25-inch welp and welped shelves to let your best of in a single 18 in. long. From \$2,000. lowes.com



Peek-a-bool

DEEPFIRM BY DEEPFIRM INC.



Look! There's a baby monitor, simpler than a home security system, that winner lets you keep tabs from a distance—like anywhere your smartphone works. \$299-\$279. deepfirm.com

APPS



HOMESMARTS, ANYTIME4U.COM/APP

Never forget to book the plumber sweep before the holidays with an app that takes a seasonal maintenance schedule to your house and sets alerts. Free for iOS and Android.



POWER SIMULATOR, ianow.com

Find the energy consumption of power-hungry appliances like your TV by dialing in wattage. Free to use and local electricity costs. Free for iOS.

Innovation at your fingertips.
TOUCH ANYWHERE ON THE SPOUT TO ACTIVATE.



Shop brands that you trust.
INCLUDING KITCHEN AND BATH
FAUCETS FROM DELTA.





FINISHING TOUCHES

Brilliant lighting



It took a couple of British designers to transform the compact fluorescent substitute into a sculptural form beginning to be left. Look: The **Flumen** (92) CFL by Helger (330 plumenetop.com) **Flum** Collection is high in the form wrapped **Flum** Coed (314) outdoor, confirm 44 colors and patterns, a classy alternative to those bulky sock covers for pendant wires.



FLUMEN CFL BY HELGER



Transitional table
BILGA COFFEE TABLE BY WILK

Traditional turned legs and a painted gray finish at **WILK** were surprised too—pleasantly so. A drawer equipped with soft closing hinges means finding the remote has never been easier. \$299 also seen.

Patternless plastic floors

BLACK FOREST OAK LAMINATE FLOORING BY BERKINGTON MILLS

Laminated in place and its right here in-use too. The pattern is from a graphic, yet, but a eye deceived surface with glossy finishes makes the natural grain of oak. Good luck finding a pattern repeat, as duplicate planks come fewer than one in eight. \$4.99 per square foot. **BERKINGTON MILLS**



High-efficiency air mover

WALKER 10-INCH CEILING FAN, BY KICKLER

In the industry shift to high efficiency DC motors, we have to applaud **KICKLER** for pumping aerobics, too. A ribbed motor case results classical contours, yet condensed blades resemble in more contemporary settings. \$235. **KICKLER** cars



Classic carpeting

HOVEDYOUTH PLATINUM WOOL RUG BY GARNET HILL

This hand loomed rug is overcast thick piles and enough visual punch to enhance bare floors without overwhelming them. Not too traditional, but two in one. It is a beautiful look for apt and memorable sales person: back the year. \$278 for 5'4" x 8'6" best overall cost.



Paperless wallpaper

STYNOGRAPH, BY TROY

What a real-world idea: a mix of nontoxic resin and ground marble and stone that feels as smooth as traditional wallpaper. Except there is no actual paper involved. So it is water-proof and emits no. It comes in 26-foot, nature-inspired panels. Photo \$13 per square foot. **TROY** com

Instant fireplace

LIMESTONE FIREPLACE SURROUND, BY ALDOBRADO STONE

Anything that makes instantly easier is an automatic winner. Tension four separate pieces to the wall in half a day and suddenly you have a fireplace surround that looks like carved limestone. From \$1,499. **ALDOBRADO STONE** com



Shoe spinner

THE LAST SHOE SPIN BY BEVA SHELF

Try a corner solution gets your shoes off the floor and off the dust bunnies, and up to a browsable level. **Beva** spins hold from 12 to 25 pairs of shoes. \$468 at **ShoeSpin** **ShoeSpin** com



Haute handles

OUTLETT PULLS BY HORTON BRASS INC

Tap-activated smooth operators—these long, semi-cold, brass bar pulls rise the game for cabinet hardware by marrying a pivoting felt with a liquid metal look. We set them in a crop-white kitchen where the three stars can share on various points. From space drawers to dishwashers. \$25-\$57. **HORTONBRASS** com

DIY library ladder

ROLLING LIBRARY LADDER SYSTEM BY ROCKLER

Why spend \$1,000 or more on a vintage-style library ladder when you can make your own for less than half the price? This set comes with all the hardware—top catch bar—and detailed plans for how to install it. You supply the wood for an 8' tall ladder. From \$520. **ROCKLER** com



New American classic

WALL ART DINING/CONFERENCE TABLE, BY JOHN BOOS

Leave it to the lords of the gourmet butcher block to devise such a stunning way to recycle scraps of American black walnut. Leftovers from their full-length tables countergops are built painted and tied up to create the 314-inch thick tabletop which expands from 7 to 84 feet with one lift. \$8,079 on show. **JOHNBOOS** com

Two jobs in one can

DUAL-PART PRIMER AND PAINT BY DUNLOP

Spring paint jobs almost always look better over a coat of primer. The new **DUNLOP** paint and primer in one—a first—promises superior adhesion on metal, wood, masonry, ceramic and glass. Intensifying the transformation in one step. \$5.99. **DUNLOP** com



APPS

PHOTO MEASURES **appmeasure.com**

Take not measurements and calculate directly on pictures of your rooms so that you'll have the numbers you need on hand when you visualize across the perfectly perfect sets. \$4.99 per app.

HOUSE INTERIOR DESIGN **houseinteriordesign.com**

Start a library of 171-96 pictures (and counting) for room, style, and location, then save favorites to digital idea books to share with family, friends, or your next client. Free for \$22.

Intuitive. Innovative. And Stylish.

DELTA FAUCETS FEATURING TOUCH₂O® TECHNOLOGY FOR KITCHEN AND BATH.



see what Delta can do

Delta Faucets with Touch₂O® Technology. AT THE HOME DEPOT NEAREST YOU.



Sometimes your hands
could use a hand.



TOUCH₂O® TECHNOLOGY. TOUCH IT ON, TOUCH IT OFF.

Touch anywhere on the spout or handle with your wrist or forearm to start and stop the flow of water. Another way Delta® is more than just a faucet.

For a demo, visit deltafaucet.com/touch.



see what Delta can do



More saving.
More doing.

Sometimes your hands
could use a hand.



TOUCH₂O® TECHNOLOGY. NOW IN THE BATHROOM.

Touch anywhere on the spout or handle with your wrist or forearm to start and stop the flow of water. Another way Delta® is more than just a faucet.

For a demo, visit deltafaucet.com/touch.



see what Delta can do



More saving.
More doing.



Detail Work

How one woman put her personal stamp on a worn 1905 Folk Victorian, filling it with custom touches and energy-saving ideas

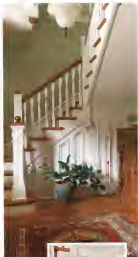
EVERYONE'S HEARD STORIES about ornate mansions gone awry, but how often do you hear a homeowner describe a process that moved smoothly, start to finish? The way Paula Kau tells it, finding and refitting her gem of a house in Staunton, Virginia, was a real pleasure—even if it did take five years of dreaming and 18 months of hard work.

"I have to credit my team," she says, referring to a series of skilled pros who live nearby and are united by a fondness for diamond-in-the-rough properties: architect Carter Green, general contractor John Workman, and cabinetmaker Fred Bonafina, who has worked on and off for Paula for a dozen years and, as he puts it, knows her sensibilities.

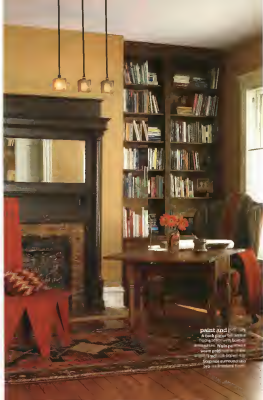
Her Folk Victorian find, squeezed into a thicket of old houses in the historic Newtown district, drew into Paula's life indirectly. A friend was shopping for a deal on an in-town floor-upper, spotted the house, and made a phone call. "Yes, the owner said, the house might be for sale."



by DOROTHY GILLEN ■ photographs by DEBORAH WITTE/LLEWELLYN ■ styling by KEAR KICKER



hidden asset
ABOVE Flares and
 paint under the
 broad hall staircase
 reveal a root closet
 (INSET, RIGHT)



point and paint
 A thick plaster full of
 flares, often with
 green paint, was
 used to cover the
 walls. The plaster
 was then painted
 green and the
 walls were painted
 green.

But when the two women returned to take a closer look, they had second thoughts: despite the house's lively war-pendant porch and five-digit price tag. At some point, the house had been divided into two apartments, the foyer was split down the middle, with a wall rising into a once-graceful arched opening to create two narrow front entrances. A full bath was wedged in next to the kitchen in the first-floor apartment, and a kitchenette was squeezed in alongside the bath in the apartment upstairs.

Sandwiching the main floor were a dark basement and an unfinished attic reachable via creaky pull-down stairs. The impact of hard times could be read in every room. Along with peeling wallpaper, green paint, and one tenant who had been stationed for 27 years, the house had knob-and-tube wiring, aged plumbing, and no insulation. Paula's friend bowed out.

In the back of her mind, however, Paula, an art history professor, was hoping to give up the high-maintenance Sheshaugh Valley farm where she and her late husband had raised their kids. She wasn't sure this house was the one. "I'm not a Victorian person, really," she confessed. But with all the work that needed doing, it seemed a chance to do it her way, with a nod to the house's history.

She took the leap—and kept her tenants for five years, time enough to map out how the house might be turned back into a single-family dwelling. Then,

Floor plans

The 2,428-square-foot house's original layout was built mostly in the 1920s, with a bath and kitchenette in the basement. On the first floor, removing a bath and adding a bathroom allowed the kitchen to grow. The utility room and powder room were tucked into space formerly occupied by a closet and exterior stairs.



FIRST FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR





space notes ABOVE: New screen openings, based on one that was damaged during a previous fire, frame the hall that leads to the historic B&O. The painted pharmacy cabinet under a trio of kitchen windows is a family heirloom.

• • • • •

with the help of Geron and the aid of her dream team, she moved quickly to bring the house up to date, with more light and a kitchen big enough to hold prep space for friends who, like her, love to cook. Forgoing a formal dining room, she would find space in the kitchen for an eating nook as well.

Another goal was to find a special spot for an 8-foot-long painted screen that had been in her grandparents' Houston home. Paula already had the raw material for the rest of the kitchen: beautifully grained white oak milled from a tree at her farm and worked in one of its barns. "Working with her is a total collaboration," says Borasileca, who also took charge of designing a perfectly oversized pull-out baking station. "She has strong ideas about the layout, I come in to do drawings, and then we go back and forth, sometimes for two or three months."

For Worleman, the first order of business was addressing the house's dim walls, drafty windows, and inefficient heating bills. Which led to Paula's first encounter with crackly historic-district guidelines.



custom touches

LEFT: A local cabinetmaker installed the grain on the cabinet doors, and left the path on one shelf as a rustic reminder of the farm the wood came from (B&O). TOP: In search of inspiration, Paula quipped local quarried soapstone with grooves cut next to the sink as a drainboard (B&O). ABOVE:



ready to roll

Homesense and Pottery Barn put to use the pretty station on wheels, which slides back under the drawer to the right of the range.

Settled in the early 19th century, Sonoma has an historic district; Newtown, the oldest residential area, is on the national and state registers of historic places. The town, by granting property-tax abatements, encourages homeowners to make improvements, but within the district, any changes visible from a public street have to be historically appropriate. Some officials offer tax credits to those who renovate historic homes, but qualifying is tough because "they look inside, where they seek to maintain the original character and features," explains Sharon Angle, the town's historic-district director.

As it turned out, the first thing Paula asked Worleman to do was remove the plaster walls so that he could restore before putting up drywall—ah, and there was the rub. During the 18-month restoration, "the one huge expense was being turned down for a Virginia state tax credit because I'd knocked out the plaster," Paula says. "That was a setback financially."

With an eye on local historic-district guidelines, Borasileca built a Victorian-style front door and sideights,

Warmer rooms, lower bills

When Paula Rosibought her century-old house, it was cold and drafty in winter and hot and stuffy in summer. Here is how she made her home more comfortable year-round while also lowering her energy bills.

Created an envelope

After getting the initial general contractor, John Wozniak, added a 2-inch layer of closed-cell spray foam insulation between the studs and sheetrock before sheetrocked the walls. The walls then got an additional layer of dense wall-pack cellulose. Horizontal framing strips were nailed along the studs to create an air barrier between the studs and the drywall.

House-center storm windows provide another insulating air barrier. Wozniak cut them down to fit precisely inside the windows for a cleaner look.

Went for high-tech HVAC

The new high-efficiency 14 SEER air conditioning and cooling system saves energy by using electronic heat pumps whose compressors allow and restrict gas flow before. Variable speed fan motors in the basement and attic are controlled with a through-the-roof system in the floors and ceilings.

Used low-tech air moves

Four ceiling fans help control air conditioning costs during Virginia's hot months by creating a breeze and circulating cool air.

Brought in natural light

Solar tubes run from the roof to the master bath and the kitchen, providing the needed light and most of artificial light.

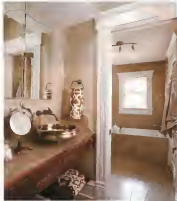
using reclaimed redwood and a variety of finish, and Wozniak shopped for traditional built-in wood, galvanized-steel gutters and a classic red standing-seam steel roof.

But with more tax credits now on the table, the team was free to think creatively inside and at the rear of the house. After removing the foyer's dividing wall, the downstairs bath and its closet, and the upstairs kitchenette, Green looked for ways to open up the first floor for better light and flow. "We concentrated our attention on back," he says, "and expanded the kitchen a little bit to create better circulation between the kitchen and living room."

At Paula recalls, "All the doorways were typical of Victorian houses, with 34-inch openings. I wanted to open up the entrance area and enlarge the doorway into the front porch." While they were at it, she and Green also decided to cut a dramatic 10-foot opening between the hall and living rooms.

The team supplied out a new layout and finishes for the new-enlarged kitchen, with an inventive, crowd-friendly L-shaped island, a marble tile backsplash, stainless-steel appliances, and Boraire's walnut-front cabinets and soapstone

super soaker. **OLD:** The two-part master bath is lined in seagrass. Boraire tile light wells in winter by natural floor heat. The wall hung vanity is made of walnut and holds a vessel sink in a white-bronze finish paired with a coordinating wall-mounted faucet.



countertop. Wozniak, who has his own mill shop, built an arched opening to the kitchen with period-style trim, replacing the arch he replicated in the front foyer. He also rebuilt the back wall, with windows framing a view of the Blue Ridge Mountains from the dining nook. They laid up over that painted heirloom cabinets as if the whole setup had always been there.

To make way for a powder room and small utility room, the team removed an exterior staircase and first-floor closet. Upstairs, they turned three bedrooms into two rooms plus a laundry room and walk-in closet, and to top things off built a narrow staircase to the now nightly unutilized, 10-foot-tall attic.

The only setback, beyond those lost tax credits? The fireplace in the living room. "Unfortunately, when we opened it up, it was cracking," Paula says, recalling with rue the need for a mason and a metal insert. "That was another \$12,000 I hadn't planned on."

Paula painted the house inside and out in soft shades of gray, green, pumpkin, and gold. Then she trimmed the front yard with a low stone wall. "The stones came from the foundation of a barn that used to be on our farm," she says. "It was a nice, sentimental thing to bring that history here." Just as nice, the owner's historic-climat watchdogs and the new wall would be just fine.

"I was lucky in so many ways," Paula says. "I had lots of ideas of what I wanted to do, and everyone was so great in helping me find ways to do them." ■



SHINE THROUGH TOP Doors salvaged from the house were partially fitted with recycled glass and installed as pocket units in kitchen and utility rooms. **RIGHT** Above salvaged doors, unusual 18th-century and dryer

ALL ABOUT

Kitchen islands

Placed at the heart of the cook space, these multi-purpose units can enhance a kitchen's utility and appearance. The experts at TOH explain how to get an island that suits your needs, budget, and style. **By Max Alexander**

Topping the list of must-haves in most kitchen renovations, an island is the perfect value-added improvement, one that transforms the way you use and enjoy the busiest room in your home.

As a minimum, an island adds counter and storage space just where you need them at the pivot point between your kitchen's cooking, cleaning, and food-prep areas. And outfitted with fixtures and appliances, such as a sink and cooktop, or bar stools for dining, an island itself can become the hub of activity. Such utility is the reason builders and designers say that adding an island often more than pays for itself by adding any other kitchen upgrade.

The first kitchen islands in America date to the colonial era. These single worktables, situated near the back of the house, were where families prepared meals and then sat down to break bread. Even after the advent of built-in dishwashers, and well into the first half of the 20th century, the island remained a freestanding piece of furniture, often with a look and style all its own. The tradition continues today, as islands often integrate materials, colors, and design flourishes that are different from those of the surrounding wall cabinets, making them the focal point of the space.

On the following pages you'll find all the information and inspiration you need to create a kitchen island that's right for you—from the critical decisions for good traffic and workflow to the many ways you can customize it to suit your particular space and the way you cook and entertain.

Where to put your island
Be sure to leave enough space around the island to permit the free flow of traffic, at around 4 and between the key activity zones centered around the stove, sink, and fridge.



Handcrafted island
made of reclaimed
oak that stands out
from the painted and
cabinets. Shown: Custom
Kitchen Island, \$15,000
(not including the
stove, sink, or
faucet). [pinkdot.com](http://www.pinkdot.com)

VITALS

WHAT'S IT COST?

Freestanding worktops or rolling carts can be had for as little as \$200. Basic built-in islands made with stock cabinetry and butcher block or granite-topped countertops start at about \$500. More features, larger sizes, and costly materials can easily push the price above \$5,000.



GET A LITTLE SPICY?

Anyone can build a worktable or cart. And an island assembled from cabinetry is more of a challenge, but doable for handy homeowners. Call on the pros for custom configurations if you plan to have plumbing fixtures and electric appliances or if you want a stone countertop (below).

How big?

An island ought to have enough counter space to meet your needs, look proportional within the kitchen, and have ample pathways around its perimeter. For smaller kitchens, a mobile or rolling cart may be a better choice than a built-in.

Island types

Consider function first, then find one that suits your kitchen's size and your budget, and has the look you want



↑ working

These furniture pieces, styled after vintage work tables, offer these drawers and open shelves. Their "see-through" design takes up less visual space than a solid island. To be used as a table, it's more than \$3,000 for a custom wood one with built-in seating and a stone top. **Similar to above:** Corbin Marble Kitchen Island with built-in granite top, 64 by 49 inches, \$1,399. thestyle.com

dining →

An overhanging counter has casual seating needs, space for a table, bar stools for casual dining, and a built-in seating—of at least 24 inches for each chair. **Price:** About \$800 for a granite freestanding dining island, or more than \$5,000 for a custom built-in island with a counter top.

Similar to above: Broyhill Cedar Country Kitchen Island with built-in dining table, 30 by 56 inches, in-line colors, starting at \$1,399. wayfair.com



← storage

A built-in freestanding or built-in island provides counter and cabinet space without the expense of built-in major appliances. Open shelves as shown here can keep cookbooks and dishes handy. **Price:** Starting at about \$100 for a movable protein unit and \$800 for a custom built-in, not including the countertop. **Similar to above:** Custom white kitchen island with sliding doors, 20 1/4 by 44 inches, \$400. cortlandindustrials.com

prep and wash →

Sinks make islands their washing needs and food and barbequing for parties. Look for sinks, like this one, to serve as a maximum counter space. One full-size sink at least 2 feet of countertop on both sides. **Price:** \$1,000 for a sink with a sink, or more than \$2,000 for a sink with storage units—of at least 4 feet long—and price about \$1,000 end up. **Similar to above:** Custom painted maple island, 44 by 48 inches, starting at \$1,500. thestyle.com



★ cooking

A cooktop island turns the chef toward the center of the room so that he can keep an eye on the kitchen. But when a range by a wall, a cooking island leaves hot parts more exposed and will add more to the kitchen. **Price:** These built-in cooktops that sit on islands typically cost \$1,000 to \$7,000, not including the countertop or cabinet. **Similar to above:** Custom maple island with cabinets and open shelves, 30 by 60 inches, about \$1,000. www.industrialstyle.com



Tip If you plan to cook and dine on an island, opt for a island eating counter to create a ready buffer against an open kitchen or eating room.



Making a plan

Keep these measurements in mind to ensure that your new kitchen island will be comfortable to use and easy to navigate

> WALKWAY CLEARANCES



For two-cook kitchens or for universal design, which accounts for people with physical limitations or those who rely on a wheelchair, plan a 48-inch passageway on all sides

> FOOD-PREP HEIGHT



> DINING AND COOKING DIMENSIONS



The higher a counter, the less reaching it needs. (If you stand less on a tall stool.) The distance between the seat and the top of the counter is always 18 inches—12 inches—which puts the surface at a comfortable height for eating.

COUNTERTOPS

Pick one that matches what's on your wall cabinets, or mix it up and use a different task-specific material.



STONE

Good for islands because it stands up to heat and another plus: It's cool to the touch, perfect for making pastry.



STAINLESS STEEL

A favorite for workstations at commercial kitchens because it stands up to water, heat, and grease. Plus it's easy to clean and resists scratches.



BUTCHER BLOCK

The best material for chopping isn't done at dull knife edges—and any nicks and scratches can be sanded out. Treat it with mineral oil for a food-safe finish.

Six ways to trick out your island

Consider these add-ons for boosting island storage capacity and functionality.



WINE STORAGE

Store bottles in built-in racks where they're easy to grab. Styles include crisscross grids, cutlery, and open shelves lined with coiled reverts (bottle). Minimum rack depths 12 inches. Costs up to 40 percent more than closed cabinets. Shown: Custom-painted cherry island with Florentine curved metal door's, rubinabest.com



APPLIANCE CUBBIES

Control clutter by storing small appliances. Microwaves need at least 11-inch clearance on all sides for airflow. Cubbies with finished interiors add about 20 percent to a cabinet's cost. Similar to shown: Custom cabinetry, factoryplanningcabinets.com

STYLISH SUPPORTS

Countertops that cantilever out more than 1 foot need support. A pair of decorative turned legs costs about 50 percent more than plain angle-brackets. Similar to shown: Narrow Islander, leg-in-a-nagle.com/wood.com



BAKING CENTER

A dropped-down station 6 inches lower than the rest of the island is ideal for kneading pastry or rolling out pizza dough. A dual-height island typically costs the same as one on the same plane. Shown: Quince2 cabinets, wimplyqualitycabinets.com



PET STATION

Close to your dog or cat with a spot for bowls and kibble. Here, food and water dishes rest on a shelf lined with stainless steel. A custom liner from a sheet metal fabricator will add about 30 percent to the cost of a \$3,000 storage island like this one. Shown: Custom bamboo island, robinet.com

OPEN SHELVES

When you want cookbooks close at hand, provide shelves at least 30 inches deep and 12 inches high, or size them to your biggest books. An attached bookcase can add 20 percent to the island's cost. Similar to shown: Custom bookcase in painted maple, platinumwood.com





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Q
Does it matter
what kind of extension
cord I use to plug in my
exterior Christmas lights?

—MARK JEDY, MAINE, CASE

A

When lighting up the outside of your home for the holidays,
make sure the cord is rated for outdoor use. It will be round and
have a UL Underwriters Laboratories tag that says "Suitable
for Outdoor Use." Inside the box, it will mention if the cord
was outdoor rated inside. Double-check the cord
and stand up to UV radiation and water.

—DOUG BRIDGE, HOME CONSUMER SAFETY DIRECTOR,
UNDERWRITERS LABORATORIES

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
MICHELLE T. WOOD

Revised 12/11/11 THERESA CARROLL FOR LOWES.COM

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Host

The brand-new copper stove hood in the kitchen is much too shiny for our 1850 saltbox. Is there a way to give it an antique look?

—MAUREN DRIES, INDEPENDENCE, MO

To perfectly plan new copper the patina of age, Tom Silva sprays it with a mixture of salt and vinegar.



Tom Silva replies: A few years back, I gave the new copper at the 2006 TCH TV project house an antique look by spraying it with a mixture of 2 cups of vinegar and a teaspoon of salt. I left the solution on for several days—eventually washed it off—and the resulting patina looked great, just like it had oxidized for several decades.

You don't need a fancy paint sprayer like the one I used; a spray bottle, a brush, or even an old rag will work just fine. Let the solution sit until the metal looks the way you want it to, then wipe off with water. But before you begin, experiment on a scrap piece of copper to make sure the color of the patina is what you had in mind.

CHIMNEY STAINS

My room is very old and is white, clean-like substance on the outside after 10-year-old brick chimney. Do you know what this is and how to get rid of it?

—CHRIS SMITH, CALISTO, WY

Kevin O'Connor replies: It's probably efflorescence, a mineral deposit that turns up fairly often on masonry. According to the Brick Industry Association, efflorescence shows

up when moisture dissolves salts in the brick or the mortar joints. After the water evaporates, it leaves white salt on the surface of the bricks.

Efflorescence is usually a temporary, cosmetic issue on new masonry and can be washed away by rain or rinsed off with vinegar. But on older masonry, such as your chimney, it may be a sign that moisture is getting behind the brick—maybe through a damaged chimney cap—and that isn't good. Call in a brick mason or chimney specialist to make a thorough, top-to-bottom inspection.

REPLACE AN UNDERMOUNT SINK

I dropped a pot into our undermount kitchen sink and cracked it. Can we fix the crack, or do we have to replace the sink?

—CHARLENE FROE, WAGON, MO

Richard Trethewey replies: I haven't had much luck repairing cracked and leaking sinks, so I generally replace them. Replacing an undermount sink can be relatively easy or a costly nightmare; it all depends on how the sink was installed.

If the sides of the sink are held in place with wood cleats or metal nails attached to the cabinet walls, or with metal clips attached to the underside of the counter, the job is fairly straightforward. Just disconnect the sink's drain pipes and the disposer if there is one, and slightly loosen the bolts or screws holding the edges of the sink against the counter. Next, slide through the walls from above using a pry bar.

Before you pull out the sink, support it so that it won't drop onto the cabinet floor. One way to do this is to remove the drawers and have a helper reach down through the drain hole and hold up the sink as you

WHAT IS IT?



A-1 Having about 100 sharp pruning shears

B-1 Probe for measuring soil pH

C-1 Spike for anchoring wire trellises

D-1 Do-

POETRY: ANDREW WELLS



A ladder stand off a house protects gutters from debris and snow, and greatly increases a ladder's safety and stability.

remove a nail, cleat, or a few clips.

But what if remodeling is without a worst case scenario? If the sink must be removed, cut into the top edge of the base cabinet, the only way to remove the sink and install a new one is to lift off the countertop or under the cabinets.

CLEANING GUTTERS

What's the best way to clean the dry leaves and wet sludge out of the gutters of a two-story house without using a ladder?

—DEANWARD FRESHMEADOWS, NY

Tom Silva replies: I know a guy who stays on the ground and racks the grass out of the gutters on his two-story Colonial using a weed-whacker connected to lengths of plastic pipe. But I prefer to work with my hands while standing on a non-slip ladder. It's simpler, and I can actually see what I'm getting the gutters clean.

If you've wanted that ladder

will scratch and dent your gutters, or, worse, slip sideways and fall over, then a stand-off attached to the top of the ladder should solve both concerns. A stand-off has two rubber-tipped arms that reach out on either side of the ladder and rest against the roof or the siding (see photo, above). It keeps the ladder from touching the gutters and makes the ladder much more stable. In fact, when you put a stand-off on a roof, there's almost no way for the ladder to slip sideways. At about \$70 or less, a stand-off is relatively inexpensive considering how much it improves your safety on a ladder.

Also, set the ladder's lower end so that it can't fall backward about 1 foot from the wall for every 4 feet of vertical distance. For extra security, drive a thick stake deep into the ground between the ladder and the house, and use rope to tether it tightly to a ring about 3 or 4 feet off the ground. Your climbs up to the gutter will feel much safer.

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A stairway needs its full complement of balusters to be safe and look its best.

I have an old stairway with several broken wood balusters. How do I replace them?

—S. CHRISTOPHER HENDER YFSLM17 HCH

David Raymond, owner, Raymond Design Builders, replies: A stair with missing balusters is not only unsafe, particularly for children, it's about as attractive as a hockey goalie's groin. Fortunately, replacing them is fairly easy for anyone who can use a saw; now it just requires some advance work.

First, you have to find new balusters that match your existing

ones. It's unlikely that a home owner will have what you need, but companies that specialize in building stairs or making stair parts, such as Hennessey Stairs (hennesseystairs.com), can often turn an identical one for you on a lathe. You'll need to supply a sample or, at least, a sketch of the baluster. For paint-grade work, maple is ideal because it's strong and smooth. For stair-grade balusters, oak is the company's go-to species, too.

Finish the new balusters before you install them, either with paint or polyurethane, then follow the steps on the next page to get your stairway back in shape.

Cost: A single custom-turned baluster will be \$40.
Time: 10 minutes per baluster.
Difficulty: Simple, as long as you measure and cut with care.

STEP-BY-STEP Replace a baluster

1. Scope out the situation

On this stair, each baluster has a tenon on its lower end that fits into the tread. A cap nailed to the end of the tread holds the tenons in place. Finding marks around the baluster is key to the handrail. (On other stairs, these details may vary.) Each baluster on a tread is a different length, so provide the company making the new balusters with a sample of each length.



4. Find the top angle

Hold a square T-bevel against the upstairs side of an existing baluster, pivot its blade against the wide side of the handrail and tighten its nut to lock the blade. To transfer this angle to the new baluster, hold the T-bevel against the new baluster so that the blade is beside the mark made in Step 3. Use the blade's edge to mark the outline.

2. Remove the end cap

Whether removing an intact baluster or replacing a missing one, first pry the end cap off the tread. If taking out a baluster, pull it sideways out of the mortise on the tread, then free the top end by prying it with a hammer toward the top of the stair. Use a square to pull out any nails in the baluster and tread, and 80-grit sandpaper to smooth the tread around the mortise and the underside of the handrail.



5. Cut to length

Using the T-bevel, set the angle of the pulley blade, then cut the baluster just next to the outline. Test fit the new baluster; it should sit flat on the tread when the tenons in the mortise have equal spacing between and the tops of the neighboring balusters. If they're not, move the top with the miter saw or a scrape or two on a block plane.

3. Measure the length

Custom balusters are made long so that they can be trimmed to fit. First, measure the upstairs side of an existing baluster from the tread up to where it touches the handrail. Mark the tape measure on the bottom edge of the new baluster—end on the floor—and transfer that measurement to the upstairs side.



6. Fit the new baluster

Drill two 1/4-inch pilot holes into and square to the baluster, angled end and out the upstairs side. Coat that end with wood glue. Fit the baluster into its tenon and drive 6d finishing nails up through the pilot holes and into the handrail. Set the nailheads with a mallet and cover with putty. Nail the end cap back onto the tread.

PHOTOS BY JEFFREY M. HARRIS

WHAT IS IT?

B-I Door stop

Unlike finger-and-downstop that can dent like casing and the door the bumperless Door Saver II pushes against the finger leaves, saving the door and trim from damage. \$5. doorsaver.com



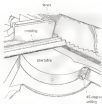
Norm's tricks of the trade

Q

I plan to install decorative molding in our kitchen, but in one location I'd like to have it stop before it reaches the intersecting wall. How do I make that look good?

—EDUARDO BALLERON/LAKEVIEW

A When a molding has a profile, or will look much better if you highlight that profile by creating a small, wedge-shaped piece from the same stock. This piece, which caps the end of the molding, is called a return because it "returns" the profile back to the wall. Knowing how to cut a return is a useful skill, whether you're installing baseboard caps, wainscot caps, or crown molding. Here's how to do it safely using a router saw.



1 Set the molding against the saw fence with its narrow edge facing up, and make a 45-degree miter cut where you want the main molding to stop. This cuts some sort of miter you make large around outside corner or frame a picture. Now cut the molding.



2 Swing the saw blade to the 45-degree miter on the opposite side. Take a scrap piece of molding that is at least 18 inches long to keep your fingers safe, and place it against the fence as the saw approaches the cut. Cut across edge up. Make sure the outside miter is the exact fit the molding.



3 Turn the blade 90 degrees. To prevent the return from breaking, throw back under the saw, place a 1/4 vertically over the blade and clamp it to both fences. There is no need to measure for the cut cut, just position the return end of the scrap piece under the blade at the point where the miter meets the back side of the molding. Take care not to cut into the miter. A few cuts will do the molding and the 1/4. There are still steps.



4 Place the return's miter against the miter on the molding. If it doesn't fit perfectly, don't try to force it down with the saw—you fingers would be too close to the blade. Instead, sand it down with a block and coarse sandpaper or go back to Step 2 and 3 and cut another return off the end of the scrap block. When the fit is perfect, glue the return to the molding and use a pin to hold it there while the glue dries.

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The history: We are told not to live in the past. But whoever restores this 1886 Queen Anne Saginaw St. Cathedral (Saginaw) will have a third one not naming nostalgia for the city's rugged age at a thriving lumber town. The house would be lumber-barn Clarence Hill by Fred W. Hollister, architect and architect who was born in 1886. The Saginaw County Courthouse, Hollister had written in 1901. After his wife died, moved on in 1949. It was divided into small apartments. The last few were vacated in the 1990s and the current owner, nonprofit neighborhood group, is looking for someone with a viable rehabilitation plan to restore the place.

Why save it? It is located in a historic neighborhood where several houses are undergoing restoration. It retains many architectural treasures, including mahogany paneling and a glass mosaic fireplace surround by artist Orlando Gersoni, who designed artwork for Frank Lloyd Wright.

What it needs: With a little elbow grease, the apartment house can be turned back into a single family home. You'll also need to update the plumbing, electrical and HVAC. Seventy percent of the woodwork is salvageable.

—BETH BARNES, 19

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• The 5,875 square-foot house has a new roof and five bedrooms, three bathrooms, and three hot air heaters. • An LPR photo-graph of the house from the local newspaper. • A fireplace removed by artist Orlando Quintero in need of restoration. • A copper stove-top burner. • The stove was not allowed into the house was carried into rental units, but all of the pieces remain in and on back on the street corner.

Got a horse? If you want to avoid future problems, be sure to send us your photo and a short bio to careers@newsline.com. Write to: **Carroll Newsline, c/o The Old House, 125 West 50th Street, New York, NY 10020**

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